

A Geometry of the Imagination

Wilson Harris's *Guyana Quartet*

Dylan Tindall



A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in English Literature

University of Canterbury

2000

Contents

Abstract	3
Introduction	4
1. Subjectivity: The Origins of Novelistic Structure	5
2. The Novels as Personal Allegory	12
I - <i>Palace of the Peacock</i>	24
1. Mandala: Interpenetration as Structure	24
2. Death as Resurrection in the Collective Unconscious	30
3. The Circularity of Narration	34
4. Observing One's Agency: Harris in the Palace	39
II - <i>The Far Journey of Oudin: Doubt and Renewal</i>	42
1. The Circle Re-entered: Wishrop, Mohammed and the Other	43
2. Ram, Beti and the Womb of Subversion	46
3. Kaiser as Mask: The <i>Quartet</i> as Ethnological Fantasy	48
4. Oudin as Mask: Exploiting the Other	58
5. The Woodman as Mask: Self-reproach	62
III - <i>The Whole Armour: The Revelation of Instinct</i>	67
1. A Bridging Dream and Jigsaw God	67
2. Magda: Hiding the Tiger	70
3. In the Wake of the Unconscious	74
4. Mattias: The Sacrificial Mask	76
5. Cristo and Sharon: The Wedding and Birth of the Author	84
IV - <i>The Secret Ladder</i>	89
1. Fenwick's Unconscious Inheritance	94
2. The Transcendent Signified as Archetype	98
3. The Integrated Vision: A Geometry of the Imagination	108
Conclusion: From Allegory to Annunciation	115
Bibliography	122

Abstract

The purpose of this work is to convey an interpretation of Wilson Harris's first four novels as a complete text motivated and unified by self-inquest. This interpretation contains two major assertions:

1. a process of self-analysis underlies Harris's representation of the collective unconscious in *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), *The Far Journey of Oudin* (1961), *The Whole Armour* (1962), and *The Secret Ladder* (1963), collectively republished in 1985 as *The Guyana Quartet*.
2. *Palace of the Peacock*, as a single structure, and aspects of *The Guyana Quartet* as a unified text, exhibit similarities with specific Buddhist concepts. Analogy with a Buddhist text, the *Gandavyuha*, is useful for understanding the representation of the collective unconscious as a moral and metaphysical structure.

The introduction includes an explanation of the novels as the author's personal allegory. This is foregrounded by an outline of Harris's personal experiences in the Guyanese jungle.

In Chapter One, a reading of *Palace of the Peacock* is preceded by a comparison with Buddhist concepts used in this discussion. Chapters Two and Three focus on Harris's use of characters as masks to explore his actions within the fictional circumstances in *The Far Journey of Oudin* and *The Whole Armour*.

In Chapter Four, the protagonist of *The Secret Ladder*, Fenwick, is interpreted as the culmination of self-representation in the preceding novels. He is a symbolic representation of the author discovering himself as an individual whose perceptions of political impasse in post-colonial culture unravel when he discovers the collective unconscious as the context of his psyche.

INTRODUCTION

In 1991 the Panamanian-born author Andrew Salkey noted that at the time Wilson Harris's first novel, *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), was being presented for publication, Harris exhibited a tendency toward concentric structures of thought:

. . . I met Wilson and fell in love with his curious mind. He started being an open but layered book to me, and I realized that I had put in my publisher's report all sorts of things that I had only suspected, but for which there was already evidence in the man's life, for instance the land-surveying politics . . . and the whole meta-physical side of his remarkable intelligence . . . His mind-set reminded me of . . . concentric mazes . . . (Birbalsingh 30-31)

In response to events he experienced while surveying rivers in the interior of Guyana in the 1940s and 1950s, Harris wrote *Palace of the Peacock*, the theme of which is transcendence of subjectivity. However, he also suspected that the structure of the novel was a product of egoism and self-aggrandizement. This doubt became a catalyst for *The Far Journey of Oudin* (1961), *The Whole Armour* (1962), and *The Secret Ladder* (1963), collectively republished with *Palace of the Peacock* in 1985 as *The Guyana Quartet*. Salkey's description of Wilson Harris's personality as a layered, open book and a mind like a peculiarly concentric geometry are equally descriptive of the qualities of self-revelation and concentric structure of the *Quartet*. The structures of the last three novels are based on references to the symbolism of *Palace of the Peacock*. This requires that interpretation of each subsequent novel be related to the structure of the first. In the last three novels an imaginary Guyanese history related to the concept of the collective unconscious was developed. Harris imaginatively located his experiences and actions within this fictional structure to imagine a historical context for the subjective experiences which inspired the first novel. During the course of writing the novels Harris discovered that instinct is a primary motivational factor in the formation of structure. This led him to affirm a belief that the collective unconscious is present in subjective and creative actions.

1. Subjectivity: The Origins of Novelistic Structure

Writing the *Quartet* led Harris to imagine that his understanding of present conditions might be reshaped by imagining different histories and using them as structures for reinterpreting subjective experiences. The processes that lead to this belief began with his own personal experiences while employed as a surveyor of the interior of Guyana. Guyanese author, Jan Carew, comments upon the effects the kind of life Wilson Harris had chosen to live in the Guyanese jungle:

The surveyors were an interesting breed . . . complete isolation without the kind of intellectual exchange that would go on in the normal course of things. Wilson lived with this for about seventeen years. It explained some of the writing in *Palace of the Peacock*. That is the writing of someone accustomed to talking to himself in the Guyana bush for seventeen years! (Birbalsingh 44)

For seventeen years Harris spent much of his time in solitude recording events in a remote environment, so it was only natural that he should turn to his surroundings as a subject for his literary endeavour. However, Harris initially discovered himself at a loss for words which could adequately describe the density of sense-datum he experienced:

One was aware of one's incapacity to describe it, as though the tools of language one possessed were inadequate. It was pointless to describe the river as running dark, the trees as green, or the rocks as gray. All this seemed less to do with the medium of place and more to do with the immediate tool of the word as representing or signifying 'place'. Later I was to relate myself to those 'representations' or 'significations' as relative faces of the dynamic mystery of language, and this for me was a groping but authentic step, into the reality of place. At first, however, I was conscious of how helpless I was in wrestling with something immensely authentic . . . And I believe in my early experiments with poem and fiction I was simply using the word as a tool of identity. That is, I could not relate identity to eclipsed perspectives of place and community. And one of the first catalysts which occurred, which assisted me to come to

grips with the kind of narrative juxtapositions which I needed and which I wanted to find, happened on an expedition into the Potaro river . . . (*Explorations* 57)

Harris intended to objectify the jungle, but instead he objectified language. He observed the words he was using as a power to represent 'place'. The very words on the page appeared to manifest a latent power activated by his employment of them as 'tools'. Language is conventionally utilized as a medium for describing relationships between objects rather than viewed as an object in itself. Realist language predicates the presence of subject and object, such as self in relationship to others, but for Harris the sensorial experience of re-reading allowed him to imagine a dialogic relationship with language perceived as an active presence in itself : 'Later I was to relate myself to those "representations" . . . faces of the dynamic mystery of language'. However, his attempts to portray something 'immensely authentic' — the past communities and perspectives he would later believe to be the origins of the dynamism of language — were initially hobbled by using language as a 'tool of identity'. Consolidation of identity seemed to be the dominant pressure motivating the use of language to construct meaning.

Writing allowed the enactment of identity to be opened to observation and conscious exploration rather than serve as an ignored precondition. This was an 'authentic step' or justifiable action in so far as it provided Harris with a conceivable subject, but if self-image is the only object the writer can genuinely access he risks creating solipsistic literature dislocated from the possibility of transcending subjectivity and finding something 'immensely authentic'. A solution to this problem was derived from a specific experience — the 'catalyst' for *Place of the Peacock*. Continuing from the description of his first voyage, Harris recalls in greater detail a later voyage in which the crew were in peril from an anchor hooked to another they had lost three years before:

It is almost impossible to describe the kind of energy that rushed out of that constellation of images. I felt as if a canvas around my head was crowded with phantoms and figures. I had forgotten some of my own antecedents — the Amerindian/Arawak ones — but now their faces were on the canvas. One could see them on the long march into the twentieth century out of the pre-Columbian mists of time. One could also

sense the lost expeditions, the people who had gone down in these South American rivers. One could sense a whole range of things — angelic, terrifying, demonic — all sorts of contrasting faces, all sorts of figures. There was a sudden eruption of consciousness, and what is fantastic is that it all came out of a constellation of two ordinary objects, two anchors. (*Explorations* 60)

Harris found meaning in the second voyage not only because of associations the images held for him as a person of syncretic genealogy, but because of its inexplicable relation to the first. A meaningful connection not explicable through conventional terms of causality appeared to be manifest in the voyages. With the appearance of interrelated events, suggestive of a hitherto unrecognized structure of experience, Harris suddenly perceived the world as resonant with past events and psychic life. Momentarily, a sense of temporality collapsed when imagination was experienced as a gateway to a dimension beyond the immediate sense of individuality and separation. Though this was an internal experience, subjectivity seemed connected to a dimension inclusive of, but extending beyond subjective experience of time and place. Both material and psychological factors compounded to form an initial experience of 'incapacity' — a feeling of absence of innate and independent agency. The second experience inspired and resurrected a sense of vision more expansive than solipsism, creating a vision of a self, time, and place as a unified dimension transcending subjectivity, but inclusive of subjective experience. The 'eruption of consciousness' must have seemed a revelation from the Jungian unconscious — a discovery of preceding peoples' experience of the jungle as psychic material innate within his individual experience.

This experience inspired a solution to Harris's initial problem of language limited to reasserting identity. Conventional usage of language establishes subjective positions in relation to one another, allowing the reader to distinguish characters and envision them as representations of living individuals, but Harris's strategy diverges from realist fictional structure at this point, by revealing that the characters are representations of memories of a prehistory. Character cannot be interpreted as representation of presence and agency once events are understood as a psychic repetition of previous events. In this way, character represents subjective experience, not as living active presence, but as the

basis for elucidating a transcendent perspective in which to contextualize subjective experience and conventional use of language. The idea of repetition is obviously a strategy derived from the 'constellation' of anchors, but Harris's inspired elaboration was to embed reference to the transcendent context of events within the dialogue that initially establishes character as a subjective position. This is the basis of *Palace of the Peacock* — a circular structure in which the transcendent perspective revealed at the end of the narrative can be found embedded in prior character formation and dialogue.

In brief, *Palace of the Peacock* is a recollection about a crew of mixed race employed by Donne to voyage up a river into the interior of Guyana in search of a community of Amerindians as labourers for his despotic and materialistic design to rule the land. During their search, they learn of a preceding voyage in which the crew had drowned. As they journey deeper into the jungle, they become increasingly argumentative as their anticipation of finding the Indians grows to the point that their own sense of presence depends upon finding them. The Indians come to represent a physical correlative to their projection of the other as an external object and antithetical agent, while their failure to locate them represents their failure to feel themselves validated as a presence in the jungle. Without possession of a physical correlative to their projection of otherness they cannot exert their identities in the environment and instead experience emptiness or a lack of presence — a sense of absence of self — shortly before their deaths.

At the end of the novel, the characters are rediscovered in the 'Palace of the Peacock' — a vision of universal community formed from a structure of individual but interdependent identities. The narrator who recalls the voyage is also contained within the Palace and therefore represents a composition of memory. Indeed, the 'death' of the crew is preceded by an original material death suggesting that the narrative is a reinterpretation of the previous drowned crew in light of the self-knowledge gained in the Palace. Donne's 'brother' initiates the narrative, but reference to him ceases once the experiences of other crew members are related. Donne too disappears at the end. He is not observed in the Palace. The narrator speaking from within the palace is a conflation of Donne and the brother as his spiritual alter-ego; however, the omniscient perspective is not attributable to a particular subjective position. The reader is left with a

disembodied voice articulating narration from a meta-perspective — a voice symbolic of the unity manifested in the Palace. In this way the narration forms a structural representation of the transcendent signified, not as God specifically, but as a timeless and dynamic state of transcendence of ego.

The result of Harris's initial self-reflection was a novelistic strategy that achieves a representation of an 'eruption of consciousness' by using 'character-mask' (*Quartet* 8) to undermine the conventional literalism of realist interpretive practice. The relationship of the characters and narrator to the transcendent signified is not directly disclosed to the reader at the beginning of the novel, but invites reinterpretation of the context of previous events. Where the conventions of 'realism' invite a reader to imagine and respond to character as a representation of an actual person, the end disclosure of transcendence forces the reader to reconsider this practice and draws attention to subject/object divisions as a preceding limitation upon imagination. This strategy incorporates the reader's often baffled but actively engaged response in the creation of meaning.

Critical responses to Harris's strategies predominantly focus on *Palace of the Peacock* and his exploration of cultural paradigms, language, symbol and psyche by way of non-realist fictional strategies. The type of response usually depends upon whether or not a critic shares his idealism, the negative exemplified in David Ormerod ('I utterly decline to take seriously any work which is prepared to indulge [Harris's] collywobbles' [cited in Daryl Cumber Dance's *Fifty Caribbean Writers*, 193]) or Sylvia Wynter's interpretation of Harris's writing as 'free fall . . . obfuscation' from an 'unrelated individual imagination' (Gilkes 103). That these writers have little sympathy for Harris's methods is not surprising, given the difficulty of his 'obfuscating' style. He often uses structures which complicate habitual search for stable references. The meaning of specific images is often not available until the reader has completed the entire novelistic structure to discover the body of interconnections in which the symbolic value of each image is suspended. Consequently, the philosophical and didactic underpinnings of the fiction cannot be discovered until the reader actively pursues the development of metaphor and structure. To some degree this strategy is most readily received by readers already armed with complex reading patterns. As A. J. Seymour asserts, Harris's work

appeals to academics rather than 'normal readers' (Dance 194); however, the later novels of the *Quartet* are less difficult to interpret as characters are represented in increasingly defined social relations and environments while also related to a structural representation of the collective unconscious initially symbolized by the Palace of the Peacock.

Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious expands upon the idea of unconscious underpinnings of the processes of conscious and subconscious mind. The Jungian unconscious is divided into two parts: instinct and archetype. Instincts are physiological processes determining our actions, while archetypes are unconscious universal ideas or tendencies that determine all psychic processes.¹ Apprehension of the world is defined by archetypes, while response to the world is instinctual, although, in the case of the modern mind, archetype plays an increasingly dominant role in response as instinct becomes ever more repressed. While both instinct and archetype are based on inherited universal experiences, archetypes cannot be directly known. Jung inferred the existence of archetypes from recurring types of ideas expressed as imagistic symbols and motifs (archetypal images) found in diverse cultures regardless of ethnic, geographic and temporal boundaries.

The experiences of characters in remote and independent localities in the later novels involve recurring memories and images, often alluding to the Palace. The development of these images represents recurring archetypal imagery. Harris constantly returned to the Palace within the symbolism and structure of the entire *Quartet* because he used the later fiction to question the basis of *Palace of the Peacock*: in relation to his acceptance of the collective unconscious as an explanation of his personal experiences, is the structure of the novel a reflection of individual fantasy and conflated egoism? Is the transcendent signified imagined in the novel a representation of a universal principle or merely a reflection of the author's personal subjective needs?

¹ 'The term archetype is often misunderstood as meaning certain definite mythological images of motifs [. . .] The archetype is a tendency to form such representations of a motif - representations that can vary a great deal without losing their basic pattern [. . .] They are an instinctive *trend* [. . .] Here I must clarify the relation between instincts and archetypes. What we properly call instincts are physiological urges, and are perceived by the senses. But at the same time, they also manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only in symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world - even where transmission by direct or "cross fertilization" through migration must be ruled out'. - Carl Jung. *Man and His Symbols*, London: Aldus Books, 1964 57-58.

Reflecting upon the first novel provoked Harris to doubt the authenticity of his actions as a writer. A need to address these doubts became an underlying motivation for writing *The Far Journey of Oudin*, *The Whole Armour*, and *The Secret Ladder*. Harris found a resolution to his conflicts by projecting his doubts and concerns into the psychology of characters and imagining fictional circumstances as a structural representation of the unconscious. Observing his personal responses to the dynamics of the fictional life revealed the unconscious mechanisms of his own personality and became thematic subject in return.

Unconscious desires and conflicts recur in a procession of characters involved in social and material situations which progressively evolve into the syncretic condition of modern Guyana faced by Fenwick, the protagonist of the final novel. In her assessment of Fenwick, Hena Maes-Jelinek finds he represents a matured figure within a process of testing to which Harris subjects his main characters:

. . . Fenwick must appear irresolute and weak. Yet he is the one who with full maturity recognizes his (or man's) limitations and throws light on the whole *Quartet* by his unremitting analysis and revision of conflicting convictions. Moral strength demands the often terrifying ordeal incurred by the breakdown of a familiar view of reality. However varied their experience, all Harris's main characters face this test through which alone the hidden face of truth can be revealed. (Maes-Jelinek 12)

Maes-Jelinek limits her analysis of the *Quartet* as a whole to contextualize her interpretation of the way language, expression and imagery function in *Palace of the Peacock* to create metaphorical structure from literal meaning. However, she does observe the interconnected characters of the novels forming a structure of 'partial deaths . . . followed by partial rebirths' by which 'advance can be resumed and previous insights further explored' (14). Though her focus is upon the figurative structure rather than character as products of a self-conscious art, she touches upon an underlying pattern of examination for 'moral strength' that ends with a matured figure.

Harris focuses not only on readily apparent post-colonial themes such as the nature and expression of the struggle for power in society, necessitating the representation of

multiple perspectives or characters, but also on the formation of his own consciousness. It is natural enough for a writer to create literature about that which concerns him most and in so doing inadvertently to represent an aspect of himself, but Harris consciously uses each new main character to 'advance' beyond doubting the integrity of imaginatively reinterpreting Guyanese history in relation to the unconscious. The creation of fiction became a means of confronting doubts, scrutinizing motives and mocking personal insecurities, when he situated his identity as a post-colonial writer within the complex of history his novels enact. Fenwick signals the resolution of Harris's doubts. Ineffectual for the most part, Fenwick only awakens to his role as an agent of the unconscious when he overcomes his insecurity and self-doubt to recognize himself and others as subject to indeterminable forces shaping modern Guyana. Though Fenwick is not an autobiographical figure, he can be interpreted in relation to the rest of the *Quartet* as a symbol of a final stage of acceptance of the first novel as more than an artful self-deception.

2. The Novels as Allegory.

Mask in the middle novels.

While the memories that inform many of the characters form a pattern symbolic of archetypal experience, we must bear in mind that some of the characters in *The Far Journey of Oudin* and *The Whole Armour* are authorial masks. To examine the way in which Harris's writing is allegorical we must understand the extent of interdependent connection between his experience of using authorial mask and the symbolic structures in which that function is inscribed. It should be noted that though the use of mask was established with the 'character-masks' in the first novel, self-reflection forms the main function of mask in the middle novels. It will be necessary to differentiate between representation of personality within the world of the novel (*character*), a character in whose speech, actions, or thoughts are expressed authorial self-reflection or self-projection (*mask*), and the author's action of using character as a mask (*conceit*).

Conceit allowed Harris to reflect upon the ethical problems and implications created when an individual attempts to define place and history, but also allowed him to imagine

other characters relating to the mask, not as a fiction, as seen from a reader's perspective, but as his presence in a fictional reality. Conceit involved Harris's psychological presence in the text to differing degrees, from merely representing an author figure, to the extreme case of creating an imaginary dialogic relationship between the author and a non-mask figure. This led to such an intensely reflexive engagement with his characters and his part in their fictive fates that the fictional world could serve as a testing ground in which Harris could explore the effects of his manipulations and observe the limits of his integrity.

In *The Far Journey of Oudin*, Harris consciously interpreted his agency with the terms of the symbolic structure and also explored his psychology as an effectual presence in the fictive world. While the conceits of the second novel reveal a deep personal involvement with symbolic structure, the mask figures in *The Whole Armour* are objectified to a greater degree and less dynamic as a result, but reveal a symbolism increasingly geared toward explaining the author's initial subjective experiences and first novel as products of unconscious forces. Tracing the developing use of the mask and conceit reveals the process wherein Harris shifted from projecting the unconscious as a context of his actions to imagining it as a presence in his imagination and conditioning the structure of the fiction.

The pattern of masks in the fiction could be interpreted as an ironic structure, but this would be a reductive account of Harris's emotional involvement and self-investment within his fiction. For Harris, writing became not merely a matter of creating aesthetic effects but a mirror with which to confront himself and discover the unconscious as a reality within personal symbolism — a reality no less viable than realist logic because it is an equally effectual force in the determination of his actions. The extent of Harris's imaginative literalizing of text later developed to a point of engaging with characters as if they were actually present in the world:

I must confess that I was in a state of unease about how to proceed with this series of lectures and then I was sort of pushed along the road, if that is the metaphor, by Jonathan Weyl, who came out of the book *Carnival*. . . Jonathan came into my study as Alicia had done, as I told you in the first lecture that I gave . . . He understood my

unease . . . He began to make certain statements and I made notes trying to keep up with what he was saying . . . He insisted . . . he suggested . . . he spoke so rapidly, at times I tended to lose the drift of what he was saying [et cetera]. (*The Radical Imagination* 114)

Harris's relationship with the fictional, but effectual, Jonathan Weyl suggests that the importance of writing to Harris's psyche developed far beyond merely responding to character and fictional situation as a reflection of himself. Nevertheless, the beginnings of imagining literal personal involvement with character began with the self-reflexivity at the inception of his fiction.

Character is more than a literary effect to Harris. The use of personal pronoun 'one' by mask-characters is also a notable feature in that it indicates the trajectory of Harris's identification with these figures. The use of 'one' as self-reference by characters bears a distinct similarity to Harris's use of the same in his essays and lectures. This suggests that Harris does not consciously distance himself from the surface of narration. By tracing the use of this form of self-reference in the last three novels we find that the personal pronoun shifts from a purely personal reference to an indefinite article when Harris conceives universal principles are enacted in his individual actions.

The Far Journey of Oudin: Doubt and Renewal

The Far Journey of Oudin opens with Oudin experiencing consciousness after death, then shifts to the relationship between Beti, his wife, and Ram, a moneylender who cannot act upon a contract with Oudin once it is terminated by his death. These events are then followed by a prehistory in which we find Oudin had violated local custom by abducting and raping Beti, once contracted by Mohammed, her uncle, to a marriage with Ram. Without a marriage Mohammed's illegally gained estate cannot be joined with Ram's fortune and their fantasies of greater material wealth cannot be realized.

As a result of pursuing fulfillment of the frustrated contract, Ram loses his identity to a psychotic preoccupation with the identity of Oudin. He succumbs to the identity of the deceased and experiences himself as a rebirth or double of Oudin. Doubling describes the psychological union of seemingly separate characters. This strategy recurs

throughout the *Quartet*. It allows one character's experiences to be related to another in different circumstances, through which original conflicts can be explored and elaborated. In this way subjectivity can be perceived through double or even multiple perspectives. Ram experiences Oudin's experience of being a phantom of 'nothingness' expressing 'consciousness' (*Quartet* 213). Save for this internal experience, Oudin is never present as anything more than a name with which others associate their desires, needs and experiences. Harris too associates his needs with Oudin and uses him as an agent to create circumstances that initially appear to validate the ostensible moral structure of the novel.

In order to clarify his intentions, Harris announces his vision through a mask — Kaiser, one of Mohammed's brothers. Though he does not ostensibly focus upon authorial self-representation, Wilfred Cartey observes Kaiser as an indication of underlying ethos and motivations inscribed within Harris's creative process: 'Through Kaiser, the author presents the transformative power of words, their cohering function . . . becoming paraphrase or soliloquy . . . the creative parable of the author's craft . . .' (402-403). In a vision of after-life Kaiser gives a commentary on the value of the materialistic life as the only grounds for proving redemption. He chooses to be reborn in a world he knows is both material and illusory because he believes that it is still a useful means for moral progression and interprets Ram's experiences as proof of this. Harris uses Kaiser to outline his reasons for using the mask to revise egocentrism. Harris realized that he would have to represent himself in the fiction in order to investigate *Palace of the Peacock*. Failure to represent himself consciously would have meant committing to unconscious re-enactment of self. Such structures could be reviewed for self-observations, but authorial self-representation (he initially conceived) ensures that he can be conscious of his actions.

In their flight from Mohammed at the end of the novel, Oudin and Beti encounter the Woodman, another mask figure. In his analysis of the relationship between character and landscape, Wilfred Cartey observes that the Woodman 'seems to be stating . . . Wilson Harris's creative processes and formulations' (3). Though this quality of the Woodman figure is only noted in passing, it does suggest that there is an underlying meaning in this character deserving of greater attention.

That the Woodman is a mask is suggested by associative images used to describe him. Like the author donning a mask, the Woodman is imagined 'pulling himself together into a rhetorical figure' (*Quartet* 221). He refers to his spirit as ink like a 'man who had drawn an image all his life' (222) and speaks in a 'grandiloquent style' because 'it was his habit to make the simplest story into something of far-reaching, dramatic significance, like a kind of memorial excuse for his human failure' (225), and the novels may well be interpreted as the author's memorial to a sense of failure following his first attempts at writing. As a 'kind of inferior Christian fabulist', Harris uses the mask to suggest that his use of Christian symbolism in the first novel is pretentious charlatantry, so in response Harris, by way of the mask, consciously 'placed himself into the heart of appearances [as though characters were] conscious of *him* as their enemy' (224; original emphasis). '*Him*' emphasizes Harris's identification with the character. As a mask, the Woodman allows Harris to assert himself within the dialogue and imagine the fictive world responding to and reflecting the presence of its author in the rhetorical figure. However, the structure of the rhetoric is further complicated by the use of the Woodman as an avatar or double of Kaiser, the preceding mask.

Beti's persistent 'what you mean?', asked of the Woodman, is met with the cryptic 'curious metaphysical perversion and *conceit*' (225; my emphasis) of the mask. While looking into his 'burnt face pressing down upon her' she feels an 'incurable pride and oppression' because she is part of an 'old estate'. Beti recognizes herself as another sees her. On one level it is the Woodman, perceiving Beti as a commodity, but Beti inexplicably imagines faces emerging within a house of crumbled windows and walls. This image refers to Mohammed's fantasy in which his ego negates the function of the Palace, but also alludes to the circumstances of Kaiser's in a burning building, hence the crumbling walls and the Woodman's 'burnt face'. Though she cannot recognize it, looking into the face of the authorial mask briefly provides her access to a perspective of the structure in which she has a greater symbolic status. After looking into the face of the mask and sensing something of the 'perverse' metaphysics involved in it, Beti evolves from 'child-like vision' (226) to have a premonition of her pregnancy to Oudin and gain a sense of self-worth and empowerment that allows her to subvert to her own ends the contract between Oudin and Ram.

The Woodman provokes a change in Beti that on one hand can be explained as her subconscious recognition of the Woodman as an avatar of her uncle, but can also be explained as a result of Harris intimating his presence in the fictive world to effect a change in the character whose actions initiate the structure of conflict. Harris uses the Woodman to provoke in Beti a desire for economic independence that defines her relationship with Ram at the novel's beginning. However, Harris also uses this mask to address a startling incongruity he discovered in this structure. He recognized that the rape of Beti by Oudin is a crux upon which events develop, particularly Ram's submission to the identity of Oudin. In turn, Kaiser's moral outline is validated by Ram's transformation, yet his transformation depends upon a lack of access to a fortune secured by Oudin's abduction and rape of Beti. This means the structure of ideal moralism is dependent upon the implementation of an immoral act and Harris's exploitation of the other, that is, Oudin. This abuse, even though it involves fictional characters, forced Harris to question his motivations. Hence the character of the Woodman, as a mask, fearing Beti's perception of 'perversity' and 'him' as an 'enemy'.

These subtle twists in reference indicate Harris reflected upon the structure and used the Woodman as a mask after its completion but the inclusion of this character as a mask at the end of events indicates that Harris did not imagine the problem of the rape could be resolved by revising the parameters of *The Far Journey of Oudin*. However, the rape did serve to highlight a conflict regarding the definition of authorial motivation and this in turn became the motivation for a third novel, *The Whole Armour*.

The Whole Armour: Writing as a Recovery of Instinct

In *The Whole Armour* Harris responds to the problems of the previous novel by adopting God as a mask, that is, he writes from the perspective of the author as the beginning and end of all meaning in the fictional world and makes indirect reference to himself in this role within the fictive world. In this sense he portrays himself as the transcendent signified. The totality of this structural egocentrism allowed Harris to avoid the rise of further structural incongruities or conflict of morals.

Magda, a whore and dissembler, is a revision of Beti, the naive Virgin. In response to Beti as 'victim' of the last novel, Harris subjects her incarnation to a structure in which her self-righteous indignation becomes a self-deception that leads to the loss of her son, Cristo. Cristo and Mattias are masks with which Harris portrays his resolution of conflicts instigated by the structural incongruities of the previous novel.

Mattias is sacrificed in order to display Harris's conception of the basis for the definition of 'guilt'. The community turn upon him after he is accused of murder and rape — accusations formerly lain against Cristo. Failing to distinguish a difference between Mattias and Cristo, the community condemn Mattias. However, their ability to define someone as guilty indicates that they unconsciously identify with the motivations of those they define. Mattias dies by his own hand. In his image they recognize his innocence and the unconscious aspect of themselves. They instinctually grasp that their previous judgement of him reveals their own failure to identify their own instincts which are normally suppressed.

In their recognition of the unconscious aspect of themselves they also recognize Cristo's innocence and when the community is forced to question the basis of their judgments of Cristo it reflects upon Harris as author. Their unconscious is of course defined by Harris as God so when they identify the unconscious aspect of themselves they are in fact identifying with the author. Harris's previous victimization of Beti is accounted for as an unconscious structural self-deception: just as the community failed to identify it's unconscious motivations, so too was Harris a victim to his own.

Cristo and Mattias are contrastive masks. While Mattias is an image of humility and self-sacrifice, Cristo is an image of the dangers of egoism based on a too literal identification with the unconscious as a transcendent signified. In this sense he represents Harris's recognition of the egoism involved in his authorial assumption of the mask of God. However, Harris inscribes himself within the structure to relate himself to Sharon who represents the unification of the female characters, or more specifically, of Harris's recognition that Beti and Magda are constructed by unconscious stereotypes. The union of virgin and whore represents a canceling out of extremes while uniting Cristo with Sharon represents Harris himself, through the mask, resolving his representation of women.

With Cristo, Harris reflects upon the motives involved in projecting to the public a self-image based on a too simplistic acceptance of the collective unconscious, or worse, the danger of prioritizing a public claim to transcendence as a personal quality. Cristo ultimately avoids making a cult of his personality but imagines his newborn son will be the author of his legacy of discovering the unconscious. He anticipates a writer who invents an account of subjectivity related to the unconscious — Fenwick in the next novel — a symbolic representation of the author. Cristo's projective vision is perhaps Harris's reward to himself — a final utilization of, and good-bye to, the unlimited agency that the mask of God affords him.

The Secret Ladder: A Geometry of the Imagination.

The process of unconscious life developing alongside the maturation of a national identity comes into focus in the protagonist of *The Secret Ladder*, whom O. R. Dathorne characterizes thus: 'Fenwick the forerunner of progress . . . is confronted by Poseidon, the apostle of tradition. They are both symbols of the new and the old and their individual conflict represents the wider issues of social dislocation. Wilson Harris utilizes archetypal symbols in an imaginative interpretation of the consequences of a colonial inheritance' (69). The doubts Harris explored by way of the previous novels were resolved with a growing identification with conflicts imagined as archetypal events in the fiction. The experiences of previous characters develop in a linear pattern moving forward through the figurative history of the novels and become a condition determining Fenwick's neurosis.

Fenwick is the character most obviously informed by the author's life experience. The inception of Harris's fiction was triggered by experiences he had while surveying in the Guyanese jungle. Similarly, Fenwick undergoes psychological changes due to experiences while surveying in the interior of Guyana. His attempts to create a survey record of material conditions is confounded by the realization of the collective unconscious as a factor as important as political and economic necessities in defining origins, identity and agency. However, he is not an autobiographical representation, but

rather a symbol of Harris's acceptance that his personal experiences and writings are preconditioned by previous generations of experience.

The political resistance of inhabitants of the isolated region Fenwick surveys brings him into contact with Poseidon, whose authority within his 'congregation' contrasts with Fenwick's inability to exert authority in his professional relationship to his crew. Fenwick continually projects an exterior source of authority and metaphysical dimension: 'He wanted to curse the glaring cunning of the receding heavens . . . he felt crushed by the overwhelming spirit of mockery and place and by his curious responsibilities' (*Quartet* 107).

Fenwick subconsciously knows the survey project will only account for the material environment and not the psychological life of the inhabitants and yet, as a record of material conditions, it will be used to justify an economic project that threatens the subjective experience and cultural identity of inhabitants not represented in the record of place. Unable to consciously admit to his part in a government project he cannot be certain of, Fenwick's faith in his own actions is breached and his internal doubts are brought to light when he is taken to Poseidon by Bryant, a crew member who believes Poseidon is his grandfather. Bryant's belief that Poseidon is a link to his own uncertain ancestral origins contrasts with Fenwick's interpretation of him as a leviathan from the past. Initially Fenwick sympathizes with Poseidon because of his bedraggled appearance, but this leads him to view him as the misconceived other — an African who has inherited the condition of victimization experienced by his ancestors. He perceives Poseidon as an object created from the effects of colonialism and imagines his very presence in the modern political culture will prove contentious and threatening to the consolidation of national unity. Nevertheless, his perception of Poseidon as a politicized object is a re-enactment of exploitation.

In his need to find a scapegoat for his own personal conflict, Fenwick projects his doubts upon Poseidon and accuses him of attempting to make everyone subservient to the tragedies of the past he imagines embodied in him. To some degree this interpretation of Poseidon is a reflection upon the previous use of God as mask in *The Whole Armour*, but Poseidon remains silent and non-judgmental as Fenwick attempts to exploit him to alleviate his own sense of guilt. This lack of dialogue forces Fenwick to

search even further inward for terms to argue with, but his argument is with himself. His sense of guilt leads him to imagine Poseidon as a god bearing a judgement upon him and suddenly Fenwick finds that the conventions by which he normally rationalizes are linked to deeper unconscious processes. He learns to recognize the relationship of self to other and to the transcendent signified as archetypal processes.

Aware of his unconscious motivations, Fenwick recognizes that Bryant's imaginary relationship with Poseidon reflects the relationship that he seeks with a transcendent authority. Bryant in part represents Fenwick's alter ego and the final chapter of the novel, entitled 'The Reading', is a narration derived from Fenwick's identification with him. The structure of narration recalls that of *Palace of the Peacock*. However, where the narration of the first novel is based on memories of a dead crew to represent the collective unconscious, 'The Reading' is derived from the subjective experiences of those still living. The events leading to Poseidon's death are recollected by Bryant, but structured by Fenwick's grasp of the unconscious to form a dream inquisition that encapsulates the representation of the collective unconscious developed throughout the *Quartet*: 'Fenwick was dreaming a very strange dream: it seemed that an inquisition of dead gods and heroes had ended, an inquiry into the dramatic role of conscience in time and being, the dangers of mortal ascent and immortal decent' (464). Fenwick's intuitive grasp of subjectivity contextualized within unconscious processes is identified with the dramatic rendering of the unconscious that is the *Quartet*. Fenwick was originally commissioned to create a record of the river levels, but 'The Reading' — his dream-story of how understanding the present is related to recognition of the depth of individual relationship with the past — is Harris's symbolic projection of himself caught in the fictional reconstruction of history.

As Maes-Jelinek states, Fenwick is 'the character who throws light on the whole *Quartet*' because of his 'unremitting analysis and revision of conflicting convictions' (12). He is created from an imaginative vision of archetypal experiences which link the past to the present, while also symbolizing Harris's resolution of his conflicts by discovering unconscious processes at work in his imaginative dramatization of subjective experience. This circular perspective of imagining a past that conditions personal experience and actions in the present, including that of inventing recollection of

the remote past, is the 'secret ladder' of the title — a vision of the self involved in a moral ascent in the present that is based on imaginative 'immortal descent' into the past via the unconscious.

The Guyana Quartet ends on a high note, expressing the ideal that the limitations of subjectivity reveal the scope of individual connection to universal processes. In the case of *The Far Journey of Oudin*, critic Jeremy Poynting admits to an excitement about the breadth of Harris's concerns and his dialectical radicalism, but declines to accept that Harris's vision is a literary success as he finds the dialectic operating in *The Far Journey of Oudin* to be 'undermined by its metaphysical idealism' as a result of failure to show 'the spiritual and material in necessary interpenetration' (*The Literate Imagination* 126). This reservation is justifiable in so far as it applies to *The Far Journey of Oudin* as an individual work. Of the four novels it is the most knotted because authorial self-consciousness conditions the representation of psyche within a metaphysical context. However, the image of universal community given at the end of *Palace of the Peacock* and the novels as a complete interrelated text successfully represent the interpenetration of individual consciousness and the collective unconscious. The terms for constructing a tripartite vision of temporal, material and spiritual dimensions dissolve when the individual's material experiences are viewed as relative to the atemporal processes of the unconscious.

The symbolism in which individual consciousness and the collective unconscious are represented as mutually conditional phenomena can best be understood through analogy with representations of Buddhist metaphysics. In *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World* (1986), Sandra Drake justly responds to the Christian symbolism in *Palace of the Peacock* by noting that a Buddhist belief system is of more use than a Christian one for understanding the novel because the structure of the novel is not based on an essentialising theism. Analogy with Buddhist beliefs can be extended beyond the issue of deity to the underlying structure of symbolism throughout the entire *Quartet*. For this reason, interpretation of the novels in this project will begin with a comparison of the end vision of *Palace of the Peacock* with Tibetan mandala and aspects of the *Gandavyuha* ('Entering the realm of Reality'), the final book in the Buddhist text *The Avatamsaka Sutra* ('The Flower Ornament Scripture').

A reference to the historical Buddha given in *The Far Journey of Oudin* suggests that Harris was not unfamiliar with Buddhist thought. However, the purpose of the comparison with Tibetan mandala and the *Gandavyuha* is to establish terms and analogy for describing the individual experience of the unconscious as it is imagined in the fiction. While his representation of interpenetration may have influenced how Harris interpreted his own subjective experiences, the comparison is not posited as an assertion that Harris holds to a Buddhist world view. Rather, it is used to provide an abstract view of how images and symbols in the fiction are organized in relation to each other.

Chapter I

Palace of the Peacock

And somebody, I declared, must demonstrate the unity of being.

- *The Guyana Quartet*, 52

1. Mandala: Interpenetration as Structure.

Sandra Drake asserts that Harris's use of the techniques of doubling and repetition are to be understood through the organizing principle of a wheel motif — a very ancient symbol for spiritual journey — recurring in the text in the images of spiders and cruciforms. She interprets the motif as a subconscious link to Eastern symbolism, especially Tibetan Buddhist mandala, but does not offer an interpretation of this cultural product.

The mandala, as it is used in Tibetan Buddhism, is meaningful within the context of a belief system quite alien to conventional western religious philosophies. It involves religious symbols in the geometry of a square within a circle. This is imagined as a perfected symbolic formulation of the cosmos as understood by the enlightened. The 'sacred circle' symbolizes the macrocosm of the universe which is conceived of as *sunyata*, or emptiness. Because all phenomena can be perceived to change in form and exist in relationships of flux with other changing phenomena, there is nothing that can be identified as fulfilling the Buddhist criteria for being; that is, no thing exists that has an independent and an inherent essence of unchanging properties. The world appears stable to those drawn to material rebirth by an attraction to material pleasure. Only by realizing the illusory nature of the material world and the self can the ego be freed of the desires which perpetuate the cycles of death and rebirth which form the appearance of ego and cosmos, or the duality of subject and object. In this sense, emptiness, cosmos and rebirth are all expressions of a single truth, the realization of which is enlightenment.

As a formulation of the enlightened perspective of Buddhist cosmology, the mandala serves an esoteric function for the purpose of meditation in which it is activated by trance to impart a vision of the cycle of death and rebirth as a realm of interpenetration. By contemplating the mandala, the Tantric devotee orders subjective experience with the geometric arrangement of visual symbols of the mandala until a sense of time and place is extinguished. Subjectivity is replaced by the mandala in which geometric unity is a product of the interdependence of individual visual symbols. The individual's subsequent experiences are not derived from an egocentric perspective, but from within the cosmology of death and rebirth imagined in the dynamic arrangement of symbols.

Jung imagined the mandala as a symbol representing the effort to unify the self, and produced his own. It was his observations of mandala as an iconographic symbol present in many geographically and temporally separated cultures that led him to conceive of the archetype and the archetypal image — images, often religious, which express the presence of a collective and unconscious structure within the individual psyche. Drake raises the issue of mandala as an archetypal image to suggest that Harris's use of Anancy, a West African mythology of the spider as a trickster figure, is part of a 'rich mythological and psychological background' (58), but the link with Eastern symbolism is only subconscious.

It is tempting to suggest that the possibility of analogy between the novel, mandala and other products of Buddhist thought, suggests an unconscious archetype. However, Harris indirectly refers to the historical Buddha in *The Far Journey of Oudin*. Harris had come into contact with Buddhism in some form prior to the novels, whether through the syncretic culture of his upbringing or his broad range of reading, which probably included Jung. While the fiction suggests a subconscious link, the possibility of unconscious parallelism with Buddhism or any other culture cannot be known. A process of comparison of Harris's work with products from diverse cultures might elucidate possible connections, but Harris consciously utilized many sources for his fiction and purposefully used revision to mimic unconscious processes. The possibility of direct unconscious influence would have to be proven with instances of figurative

structure created without prior experience of similar images from other sources — a difficult prospect given the breadth and depth of Harris's cultural gleanings.

Harris utilizes references to many traditions. His use of the Christian mythological tradition for example, is a source of symbolism Harris uses to form an impression of the collective unconscious, but its symbols are not used to present a soul on a path to salvation within a framework of sin against a divine edict. As Drake finds: 'In many respects, this psychological journey has more characteristics of Eastern religion than of Christianity, specifically the idea of reincarnation and the sense of a truth that, although it can be denied and involves the play of *karma* (deeds) that carry consequences, is devoid of the idea of sin as a violation of laws promulgated by some divine authority' (68). Throughout the *Quartet*, characters do not sin so much as act in ignorance of their total being as it relates to the collective unconscious. Nevertheless, awareness of the unconscious develops into self-realization. Like Buddhist morality, the moral progression enacted by the fictional characters is represented in a model of metaphysics.

The Palace can be interpreted as a mandala representing the unconscious as an interpenetrative dimension for the subsequent novels. The motif of the wheel that recurs in *Palace of the Peacock* prefigures the structure of the vision given at the end of the novel in which the perspectives of all the characters are gathered together to form the Palace of the Peacock — a geometric symmetry of windows through which the characters of the novel see themselves in each other. This is an image of interpenetrating perspectives: each subjective element within the unconscious provides access to all other subjective experiences. Collectively, they create a dynamic unified geometry to which the symbols of the following novels are linked. The Palace of the Peacock, as an image of interpenetration, can be better understood by comparison with a similar image in the *Gandavyuha* sutra (teaching). The *Gandavyuha* begins with the Buddha giving a sermon to a congregation of followers and bodhisattvas (beings whose enlightenment and transcendence of attachment to self is ultimately to benefit others). As the appearance of the cosmos is based on emptiness, the Buddha and other enlightened beings are, like any other phenomenon, manifestations of illusion. In order that the congregation be able to envision how this is possible, the Buddha invites a demonstration of the practice of enlightenment which involves Sudhana, a Buddhist everyman, in a quest for

enlightenment. His quest forms a major part of the narrative in which he is taught by numerous teachers from many lands and cultures. Near the narrative's end, he finds the Buddha Maitreya and asks how to become a bodhisattva. Maitreya invites Sudhana to enter the tower of the Buddha Vairiocana. Sudhana's entry into the 'realm of reality' is an initiation into transcendent vision and a dramatic high point of the narrative:

Sudhana circumambulated the enlightening being Maitreya and said, "Please open the door of the tower, and I will enter." Then Maitreya went up to the door of the tower containing the adornments of Vairiocana, and with his right hand snapped his fingers: the door of the great tower opened, and Maitreya bade Sudhana enter . . . As soon as he had entered the door shut. He saw the tower immensely vast and wide . . . as measureless as the sky, as vast as all space, adorned with countless attributes . . . inside the tower he saw hundreds of thousands of other towers similarly arrayed: he saw those towers as infinitely vast as space . . . yet these towers were not mixed up with one another, being each mutually distinct, while appearing reflected in each object of all the other towers. Then Sudhana . . . was cleared of all conceptions and freed of all obstructions. Stripped of all delusion, he became clairvoyant and without distortion, and could hear all sounds with unimpeded mindfulness . . . his intellect followed the unobstructed eye of liberation . . . The moment he bowed, by the power of Maitreya, Sudhana perceived himself in all those towers; and in all these towers he saw various diverse inconceivable miraculous scenes. In one tower he saw where the enlightening being Maitreya first aspired to supreme enlightenment. (Cleary 365-75)

This is followed by an expanded description of Maitreya's past quest and activity as a bodhisattva and the actions of many other bodhisattvas. In essence, the tower of Variocana contains innumerable towers containing each and all, as well as the enlightening activity of all bodhisattvas whose knowledge Sudhana seeks. Sudhana too is contained within each of the towers. The towers are first defined by their relationship to each other as independent objects in time and space, but, once their separate attributes are imagined within each other and Sudhana is imagined as present within all aspects of the vision, the initial possibility of conventional perception of physical and temporal separation collapses. As separate spaces, the towers, events and beings witnessed by

Sudhana mirror his own conventional subjectivity (hence his presence within them), but in their mutual penetration of each other they display an absence of inherent immutable substance and impress upon the imagination a paradoxical sense of a subjective perspective unified with eternal and infinitely expansive space.

As a structure containing a vision of interpenetration, Variocana's tower is a symbolic correlative to enlightenment as a power to make a constructive appearance of sunyata (emptiness). It is an architectural form containing other transparent and mutable architectural forms. As a containment of the path to enlightenment enacted by innumerable bodhisattvas, it is in itself a demonstration of the power to which those bodhisattvas progress and help others attain. Like these bodhisattvas, Sudhana has to realize enlightenment as the basis of his being. This he achieves in later experiences of interpenetration.

Like the tower, the Palace of the Peacock is an 'intangible architecture' (*Quartet* 8) containing and ordering subjective perspectives. Characters are imagined standing at windows likened to 'observation towers' (113) through which they see themselves 'reflected again in each other': 'The unceasing reflection of themselves in each other made them see themselves everywhere save where they thought they had always stood' (80). Just as each of the towers contains all of the other towers in Sudhana's vision, each window in the Palace can be viewed from all of the other windows, implying a circular structure or wheel. Like the mandala in which visual detail is unified within a circular format, both narratives utilize images arranged in a symmetry that constructs a unifying structure from seemingly individual portals. As with absorption of/into mandala or magical architecture, time-space is not perceived through a material axis but as an interaction of symbolic spaces informed by all other points in space to convey a sense of transcendence at any point one chooses to enter. In this way the unconscious is imagined as a nexus of experiences rendered void of center or ego when they are incorporated into each other. Though there are obvious figurative differences, the underlying abstraction is the same in both texts and in both cases used to convey a sense of transparent universalism. The difference lies in the transcendent signified expressed; enlightenment as a universal principle in the case of Variocana's tower, and the collective unconscious in the case of the Palace of the Peacock.

Images alluding to the Palace recur throughout the *Quartet* to suggest that the psyches and material experiences of the characters are to some extent determined by the collective unconscious. The Palace becomes a symbolic hub of unconscious condition extending through the changing material and sociological conditions of the fictive history. Individual experience within the history stems from and returns to the unconscious to become a condition of subsequent characters. Where the characters of *Palace of the Peacock* are already dead, later characters experience their lives as if penetrated by previous lives and identities. Their experiences are localized reflections of the interpenetrative structure of the Palace. Like Mandala, the Palace has the same function and relies on a similar circular structure to represent the unconscious as macrocosmic experience developed through the microcosm of individual subjectivity in the last three novels.

Past conflicts can be revised by the experiences of new characters making the unconscious a process of moral development: however, the most dramatic conflict experienced by characters is their realization of the unconscious. The characters are subject to pre-histories while at the same time they must respond to the immediate needs of survival in often inhospitable material environments. When their social and materialist manipulations fail they have nothing else in their possession to prove themselves as effectual independent individuals and their faith in selfhood is corrupted. Yet the unconscious memory of past experiences of place, being immaterial, cannot be lost. Though the lost self is mourned, transcendence of subjectivity is activated.

Like the Buddhist metaphysical view, temporal and ontological distinctions are problematized to undermine attachment to ego and materialist ordering of perception. Harris's use of the term 'void' in the fiction should be understood in light of a moral progression imagined of the causal interchange of the material and immaterial: 'If indeed therefore any real sense is to be made of material change it can only occur with an acceptance of a concurrent void and with a willingness to descend into that "void"' (*Tradition, the Writer and Society* 61).

2. Death as Resurrection in the Collective Unconscious

In *Palace of the Peacock*, to a greater degree than any of the other novels of the *Quartet*, figurative details which are interpreted literally become entrapped in a circular structure that becomes apparent only after the reader has deepened their engagement with the narrative. The polysemy that results is only apparent after the recollection of events in a material world is qualified and undercut by the metaphysical perspective realized at the end. The vision of the Palace of the Peacock occurs after the death of the crew, creating a sense of transcendent vision that reconstructs the voyage to make it an outline of a psychic journey. This frustrates any attempt to interpret the experience of the crew as perception of a stable ontology. The crew members die individually during the journey, but implied within the text is the possibility that they drowned together after their boat struck a rock in the rapids of the river.

The crew evade an 'unconscious head' of rock 'pregnant with creation' (32) and appear to escape the danger, but the captain and bowman turn to 'momentary stone' at Vigilance's cry and the entire crew are 'crucified with Vigilance'. As stone and crucifixion their deaths are identified with the unconscious head of rock and a vision of Christ later experienced by Donne. Though they are not aware of it, the crew have died but are resurrected as memories in the Palace — a symbolic representation of the collective unconscious in which the crew are re-viewed as 'active ghosts' (33).

When Schomburgh says "They don't see dead people really, do they? Nor dead people seeing them for long", Cameron retorts with "I ain't dead" because he can smell cooking fish: "It's good fish not the devil himself you catch." The irony of his proof is that the fish, despite the experience of its smell, symbolizes Holy Communion within an ongoing use of Christian symbolism. Cameron's statement is an 'epitaph' (46-47) to himself in a narrative that is both allegory and elegy spoken by the resurrected dead. Both obviously and discreetly, images and words are combined and structured to suggest double, even multiple possible interpretations of symbol and figurative meaning.

Conventional reading of fiction involves imagining character as representation of individual presence. This is reinforced by characters who themselves refer to each other

as if they are present as innate and independent selves. However, the visionary revelation of death as a precondition of the events described undermines the possibility of imagining characters as representations of actual people. Though this mechanism is created at the end of the novel it provides the starting point from which to view Donne's voyage as a journey toward realization of transcendence of attachment to ego-centered perception.

Donne and the crew represent memory continuing after life. However, death is imagined as an experience that cannot be remembered, only symbolized. Unable to recall an end to life, the characters are 'active ghosts'; that is, their memories remain psychically active. For this reason, Donne can initially be examined as a still intact and consistent representation of individual psychology available to methods of interpretation one would apply to a character in a realist fiction. Though his voyage and experiences are representations of a purely psychic transformation within the unconscious, his personal conflicts are a condition of memory.

Donne's personal conflict is expressed in his perception of the Amerindian Indians. He regards the 'blasted Buck[s]' (53) as less than himself, but is also dependent upon them to work his plantation and realize an egotistical fantasy of himself as ruler of a landscape reflective solely of his own power and image. The prehistory of Donne's material life represents the Colonialist challenged by lack of access to the encompassing, but ultimately unknown reality of the other.

The unknown native is presumed as a presence originating from nature and land, but this perception of authenticity is not permissible to the Colonialist's conscience as it conflicts with the definition of the native as an object of lesser value than the Colonialist agent and subject. Consequently the native is feared, and all the more so for being a constant reminder to the Colonialist that he is an outsider. As other, the native is seen as the center of judgement, reflecting to the Colonialist the fearful self-knowledge that his self-image is inauthentic because it is only a role acted out within a socio-economic structure that makes him dependent on the other.

Until he can physically obtain the Amerindians he needs to bend the land to his will, Donne's vision of himself as an independent ruler cannot be enacted and consolidated by recreation of the landscape. Because he fails to locate them he is left at a loss, unable to

create a material dimension to reflect the Colonialist self-image he aspires to. He experiences this loss as nothingness and is confronted with the realization that he has tried to construct an identity out of an obsessive desire for a sense of belonging not connected to community:

[Donne] had been supported by death and nothingness . . . this dreaming return to a ruling function of nothingness and to a false sense of home was the meaning of Hell? He stared upward to heaven slowly as to a new beginning from which the false hell and function crumpled and fell.

A longing swept him . . . However far from him, however distant and removed, he longed to see, *he longed to see* the atom, the very nail of moment in the universe . . . even if in seeing it there was a frustration in the distance between himself and It strengthened rather than weakened. The frustration would disappear he knew in his sense of a new functional inspiration . . . (101)

Donne realizes that his attempts to rule the land as a despot have lead to a 'false home' and finds there is nothing else supporting his conscious beliefs. Realizing his self-deception he imagines he is subject to rule by nothingness. This for him is the depths of hell, but where there is hell there is an associated heaven (symbolized by his looking up the escarpment) and the prospect of redemption.

Within the context of the collective unconscious, in which his journey is inscribed, the memories of Donne as an individual come into contact with images from Christian mythology as expressions of archetype. His experiences become associated with Christ in the form of stigmata as a 'nail of moment'. Where before Donne had projected an idea of the other upon the Amerindians, he now projects a desire for a transcendental signified exterior to himself. The symbol of a metaphysical vision allows Donne to imagine the possibility of redemption. Maintaining claims to personal sin means that he still holds to a concept of independent selfhood, but within the Christian perspective Donne must view himself as subordinate to the judgement of a transcendent other. His desire to see the transcendent signified implies that it is an object exterior to himself, but this also allows him to imagine himself in a subjective relationship with an object. This is symbolized in his vision of Christ through a window in the cliff. The Christ in the

window is not a representation of an actual person, but is to be understood in relation to the windows of the Palace or collective unconscious, as an archetypal symbol activated by Donne's association of hell and heaven. The image of Donne viewing Christ through the partition of a window suggests the self separated from the transcendent signified. However, the Christ image is not only a symbol of God incarnate, but of access to God through the death of Christ and resurrection. The image resounds with possibilities, like a mystery, but each possibility is elaborated.

Donne's desire for connection to an object imagined as exterior and authentic closes the distance implied in a subject/object relationship and he experiences himself as a double of the Christ: 'It was death with Capitals, and when he saw this he felt too it was he who stood within the room and it was the carpenter who stood reflected without' (103). Donne identifies with the Christ as a symbol of death and in this recognizes his own physical death. However, the condition of seeking a relationship that will allow independence to be distinguished, even if recognized as a locus of past sins, persists.

The desire for a relationship leads to a second window further up the 'fantastic ladder' (105) of the unconscious in which Donne sees a vision of the Madonna and child. Her hair, dress and the 'insubstantial straw in the cradle' (106-07) are combined under the light of a candle with a star upon it. Here the Christ born of immaculate conception is a symbol of the power of God incarnated in the world. The archetype expressed in this image is of the interpenetration of material and spiritual dimensions. This leaves Donne 'truly blind'; that is, his attempt to see events as if he were still conscious and perceiving a material reality is extinguished and he can view his past life in comparison with the transcendent perspective:

. . . he saw himself melting into nothingness . . . he had loved
no one but himself . . . He focused his blind eye with all
penitent might on this pinpoint star and reflection as one looking
into the void of oneself upon the far greater love and self-
protection that have made the universe. (107)

His entry into the 'endless void of himself' (108) is a passage through the microcosm of the individual psyche into the collective unconscious as a transcendent state of a

universe of connection to other subjective positions. Located in the unconscious, Donne's memories, along with the rest of the crew's, are 'endless' in that they contribute to the collective unconscious. Donne can identify his experiences as symbolic reconstruction: 'It was his blindness that made him see his own nothingness and imagination constructed beyond his reach . . . The void of themselves alone was real and structural'. Void is not in itself a negative value because, in these terms, it is the manifestation of compassion for others. This contrasts with Donne's earlier feelings of 'nothingness' as a mourning of lost identity. When the attachment to ego and subjectivity is surrendered, the projection of the other is surrendered. This leads to Donne's 'Second Death' and resurrection with the rest of the crew in the 'home' of the 'compassion of the nameless unflinching folk' (110). He is not referred to again.

The home of the 'compassion of the nameless unflinching folk' recalls an earlier event in which the crew had passed through the mission of Mariella. The crew seemed initially to dock at a material place inhabited by the Amerindians, who 'remembered that . . . this self-same crew had been drowned' (37). The population had vanished in an instant at the sight of Donne. In hindsight, the village and the inhabitants were not representations of a material reality, but an image constructed from the crew's memories of a previous voyage in life compounded with the symbolism of death. The villagers' disconcerting memories are a reflection of the crew's self-recognition: 'death was the reflection of life'. In the reflective reversals of the dream voyage, the disappearance of the imaginary Amerindians prefigures the resurrection of the crew in the 'home of the unflinching fold'; that is, the disappearance of the projection of the other coincides with the crew's surrendering of attachment to self and gaining of compassion.

2. The Circularity of Narration

Donne functions as a vehicle for leading and ordering interpretation of events, but the end vision extends beyond the psychic development of Donne and back to his brother as an individual presence and source of first-person narration. An image of an actual brother is never presented at any stage before, during, or after the voyage, and in Book Three, 'The Second Death', self-reference attributed to a narrator ceases altogether,

leaving the reader without a guiding reference until the last stage of narration, when it returns as if attributed to an omniscient speaker. This can initially be interpreted as Donne, but by this stage he and the rest of the crew have realized they are 'void' (106); that is, without presence. Alternatively, the narrating voice can be interpreted as a manifestation of Donne's spiritual alter-ego.

That Donne and the brother should be read as a unified experience is confirmed when the brother is identified 'reliving Donne's first innocent voyage and excursion into the interior country': 'I saw — rising out of the grave of my blindness — the nucleus of that bodily crew of labouring men I had looked for in vain in his republic and kingdom' (27). Momentarily the 'brother' cites himself in Donne's role as the assembler of the crew which Donne had drawn together. However, the omniscience of the alter-ego is formed from a juxtaposition of the subjective perspectives of all of the individual crew members, not only Donne's. Each member represents loss of centered vision: '. . . they had been shattered and were reflected again in each other . . . The unceasing reflection of themselves in each other made them see themselves everywhere save where they thought they had always stood' (*Quartet* 80). The unconscious is imagined as a dimension of interpenetrating reflections to suggest that the transcendent perspective is derived from the conjunction of all subjective experiences.

As Hena Maes-Jelinek notes, the narrative is composed of perspectives juxtaposed 'without transition' (*Naked Design* 13). Without having to deconstruct a given image of a narrator, Harris can allow the illusion of a limited first-person narrator to slip into an omniscient perspective without drawing immediate attention to the change in structure. The interrelation of multiple perspectives realigns the initial meaning of the narrator's use of personal pronoun with the vision of universal community at the novel's end. Because the different perspectives ultimately inform one voice, there are no seams or spaces for a sense of self-reference to be developed as reference to an actual independent persona. The narration itself becomes a display of language freed from individual identity, and the narrating 'I' as a composite of interpenetrating reflections — a 'nucleus of [the] crew' as it were — becomes a symbol of omniscience achieved by the unification of partial perspectives.

Once the riddle of the narrator is solved, the reader may turn back and reinterpret previous descriptions of the experiences of the 'active ghosts'. For example, the connection between the narrator and Donne only appears explicit upon re-reading. 'The change in Donne I suddenly felt in a flash was in me' (33): it is not that there is a brother present who feels empathy for, or identifies with Donne; rather the voice of the unconscious refers to itself in the possessive form to describe the entry of the memories of Donne into its universal psychic dimension. That dimension is imagined as having spatial structure correlative to the music that resounds through the Palace:

The music Carrol sang and played and whistled suddenly filled the corridors and the chosen ornaments of the palace . . . One was what I am in the music — buoyed and supported above dreams by the undivided soul . . . This was the inner music of the peacock I suddenly encountered and echoed and sang as I had never heard myself sing before. (117)

Harris provides an image of sound as a penetrating and ineffable quality constructing a sense of space. The 'inner music' is 'echoed' in the narrating 'I' — the voice represents the unconscious as spatial dimension. At the same time the narrative also corresponds to the music. The narrating voice is given form by the subjective experiences of temporal dimension that construct the narrative — 'I am in the music'. The enigmatic narrating voice and the narration it creates and by which it is given form, represent a double vision of the unconscious as immaterial spatial dimension.

From the beginning the double vision is a condition of meaning:

The sun blinded and ruled my living sight but the dead man's eye remained open and obstinate and clear.

I dreamt I awoke with one dead seeing eye and one living closed eye
 . . . I greeted [Donne] as one greeting one's gaoler and ruler.
 And we looked through the window of the room together as though through his dead seeing material eye, rather than through my living closed spiritual eye, upon the primitive road and the savannahs . . . (19-20)

'One dead seeing eye': death symbolizes the end of ego and the beginning of transcendent vision, while the vision experienced in material life guided by ego is partial; 'one living closed eye'. The spiritual eye is complete in its perceptions of the meta-perspective available to the unconscious, hence it is 'closed' to conscious perception of the landscape. The material eye is blind (or 'dead') to the perspective offered by the transcendence of ego, but sees the material landscape. However, these distinctions should not be taken as indications of judgement upon attachment to ego and the material life for the meta-perspective comes to light through the limitations of materialist perception. Hence the narrator is blessed with both eyes — both an egoistic and transcendent perspective. A negative judgement would be derived from an alternate set of consciously held values, but because the vision of the unconscious as an ego-less state is derived from partial perspectives it cannot express a set of independent propositions to formulate a judgement. Donne's materialist perception is 'the only remaining window on the world' because a materialist vision must be established first in order to see through and beyond it and imagine compassion as a universal principle.

The novel ends as it began with a double perspective of narration: 'as I had never heard myself'. It is the new voice, an echo of unconscious dimension, that articulates the initiating memory of a dream in which Donne is shot by his mistress, Mariella, but she is also another double. Her name is that of the Amerindian village Donne sought during the voyage. While the opening shot kills the figurative Donne, it also signals an unconscious recognition of injustices to the natives becoming a structure of memory within the unconscious. Initially, the shot appears to wake the 'brother' from a dream: as if it 'stifled my own heart in heaven' (19). But, reinterpreted, this represents Donne's experience of subconscious guilt in life as a condition of his memories as they inform the 'brother'. In hindsight, the dream of murder appears as a symbolic correlative to Donne's injustice of identifying the natives as other realized during his surrender of self-image. This is confirmed when the crew visit the village to find phantom Indians who, because of their 'dreaming knowledge' (38), understand Mariella had killed Donne. The narrator's dream and the image of a village of ghostly inhabitants reinforce each other to signify that the deconstruction of Donne involves an identification with the other.

The resurrection of the crew in the 'home' of the 'compassion of the nameless unflinching folk' represents the resolution of guilt within the collective unconscious symbolized by the Palace. The Palace is the true 'home' of memory where past psychological conflicts are resolved: 'It was the dance of all fulfillment . . . canceling my forgotten fear of strangeness and catastrophe in a destitute world' (116). After Donne disappears, narration shifts back to this first-person mode. The narrator is not identified, but given that Donne has died, the reader can assume the speaker is the alter-ego/brother achieved in his self-realization. However, the full Mandala-like dimension of the Palace of the Peacock has not yet been outlined and it is from this that the alter-ego as a product of circular narration receives its full dimensions.

The narrator looks over Vigilance's 'dreaming shoulder' to see a vision of an 'unfinished and insubstantial' landscape that can only be accessed through 'trusting kinship and contagion' (111):

One had an intuitive feeling that the savannahs — though empty
— were crowded. A metaphysical outline dwelt everywhere
filling in blocks where spaces stood.

The landscape is a symbolic correlative of the narrating voice that has recalled Donne's experience — an 'I' that filled in the 'spaces' of character to form the building 'blocks' of the narrative. The initial narrating 'brother' appeared originally to see the savannahs through the 'incurable infection' of Donne's material eye. This is here explained as the result of 'trusting kinship and contagion'. Only through the foil of a 'brother' seeing through a materialist vision like Donne's could the transcendent perspective have been developed; however, the kinship is inclusive of all the characters. The landscape is seen over Vigilance's 'dreaming shoulder' to suggest that his perspective, like the internal experiences of the other characters, is also a part of the initial dreaming 'brother'. 'Brother' comes to denote not only alter-ego but also the interrelation and unification of all individual experience within the structure of narration: 'I was suddenly aware of other faces at other windows in the Palace of the Peacock' (114). Once the name 'Donne' ceases to function as a trope for representing emptiness, 'I' predominates as a symbol of transcendence of attachment to ego. This is a paradoxical use of the personal

pronoun, the normal function of which is for asserting the ego as a presence. In this reversal of convention, language is not used as a 'tool of identity' as the narration appears to transcend recourse to asserting ego as an ontological state

4. Observing One's Agency: Harris in the Palace

Though it is not a realist fiction, *Palace of the Peacock* is based upon the conventions of realist reading processes brought to the text by a reader imagining that character is a literal representation of a living person. The assumption of habitual reading method is frustrated in order to force the reader into a process of revision. The impression of a voice speaking from the unconscious only appears within an interpretive action that shifts outside the realist prepositions of conventional linear reading processes to recognize a circular structure in which the end vision not only defines the beginning, but is played out in the construction of language and symbol at every point in the narrative.

The structure of *Palace of the Peacock* is a mechanism which allows the reader to observe his or her participation in the realization of structure. The geometry of the narrative is not revealed until the very end of the story (or the middle of the reading process) when negation of presence, within the context of Donne's attainment of self-knowledge, is valorized as moral advancement rather than a loss. The deconstruction of character and structure may allow the reader to recognize Donne's self-discovery as a reflection of his or her own unconscious disposition to assume real presence of fictional character. Ultimately, the reader, like Donne, is able 'to lay hold upon nothing after all', but the reader at least may recognize his or her imagination as an active force rather than a passive condition within the reading process.

While the reader may or may not recognize his or her agency, Harris does not fail to recognize his own. At the end of the novel, in the final depiction of the Palace, he subtly intimates his own presence as the basis of the creative process and voice of the alter-ego:

I was suddenly aware of other faces at other windows in the Palace of the Peacock . . . change and variation were . . . induced by the limits and apprehensions in the listening mind of men, and by their wish and need in the world to provide a material nexus to bind the

spirit of the universe . . . I listened intently to the . . . dragging chain of response outside my window. Indeed this was a unique frame I well knew now to construct the events of all appearance . . .

The 'dragging chain' is an echo of Harris's experience of dredging up an anchor from a previous voyage. 'I well knew now to construct the events of appearance': Harris imagines his own 'listening mind' as a window in the Palace and the text as a 'unique frame' created in response to his desire for a 'material axis' for 'binding' together a vision of the collective unconscious as a universal principle or 'spirit'.

With his first novel Harris created a first-person narration contextualized by a vision of transcendence that is itself a transposing of his personal conception of the collective unconscious and his belief in a personal transcendent vision after his subjective experiences. While the narrator is related to the characters as alter-ego derived from their conflicts, life experiences and experiences of archetypes, the source of the narration is Harris outside of the text. The 'meta-physical outline' is derived from his vision of antecedent events in the Guyanese jungle:

It was a vast impression and canvas of nature . . . One had an intuitive feeling that the savannahs — though empty — were crowded. A metaphysical outline dwelt everywhere filling in blocks where spaces stood and without this one would never have perceived the curious statement of completion and perfection.

The 'canvas of nature' is comparable to the 'constellation of images' which Harris felt as a 'canvas around [his] head . . . crowded with phantoms and figures.' While the narrator's use of 'one' symbolizes transcendent unification, the 'intuitive feeling' of a metaphysical landscape is a symbolic rendering of Harris's subjective experiences in the jungle. Here then, the 'one' refers to Harris as the creator of the 'unique frame' of the narrative — the novel as a 'curious statement of completion and perfection'.

As a post-colonial writer Harris was confronted with the difficult proposition of viewing his experience of Guyana from outside contemporary conceptions of socio-political situations. This he attempted by imagining his experiences are a product of a collective unconscious available to the post-Colonial. In the novels that follow Harris takes issue with this view,

questioning whether or not the narration of *Palace of the Peacock* is a perfected symbolism for imagining a perspective that transcends the contemporary historical perspective, or merely an outline of personal egocentrism that the reader is forced to reconstruct.

After observing his own motivating 'wish and need' to create a 'material nexus to bind the spirit,' Harris anticipates that his identification with the fictive construction of psychology is an ironic condition of the following novel: 'Wishrop's face dawned on my mind . . . I felt the new profound tone of irony and understanding he possessed . . .'. Wishrop recurs as a condition of Mohammed's unconscious motivations in the next novel, *The Far Journey of Oudin*. When considering the extension of the symbolic meaning of the first novel in the formation of the second we must bear in mind that Harris's identification with the fictional world is an underlying condition of representation of individual psychology.

Chapter II

The Far Journey of Oudin: Doubt and Renewal

[A] necessity exists for an art of extremity in which
one must, time and time again, immerse oneself.
— *Explorations*, 46

With the middle novels of *The Guyana Quartet* Wilson Harris meditates upon the motivations of his writing. He questions whether his experiences and creation of *Palace of the Peacock* were the result of a delusional idealism or a product of the unconscious historical forces he describes: can one validly objectify the unconscious as a historical force when one's identity and agency as a writer is necessarily inscribed in that history? To observe his identity as an enactment of historical forces, Harris created a fictional history in *The Far Journey of Oudin* and *The Whole Armour* in which he employs masks to represent his authorial presence in the fictive world.

The authorial self-representation is embedded within the experiences of characters with two psychological dimensions: a conscious public identity, and a private life of unconscious associations alluding to the experiences of previous characters who are historically and geographically remote. In *Palace of the Peacock* the collective unconscious was imagined in terms of the memory of subjectivity in an isolated and undeveloped environment. In the middle novels the concept of a collective unconscious is developed through depiction of living individuals confronting the structures that order community. Two strategies for achieving the eruption of the unconscious into the conscious life are imagined: corrupting obsessive attachment to material wealth, and in *The Whole Armour*, by engagement in rituals which bring the unconscious to bear upon the conscious life, principally Magic and funerary rite. When the characters of the middle novels realize the unconscious as a condition of their experiences and sense of selfhood, they, like the characters in *Palace of the Peacock*, experience an internal

conflict which erodes their confidence in the identities they normally enact in the community. Often, at the moment in which the structure of their conscious thoughts collapses, they are reconstructed as sites of authorial self-representation where Harris expresses observations about his role in constructing their fictional circumstances.

Initially, in *The Far Journey of Oudin*, Harris observes himself placing Beti in an abusive situation to validate his vision of a moral ideal expressed through Kaiser. This involves him in exploiting the other, represented by Oudin, by using him to figuratively rape Beti. Though figurative, the rape is an important linchpin of the structure of the entire novel, as well as the next. In *The Whole Armour*, Harris interprets the previous symbolic images of abuse as reflections of a process of instinctual motivations underlying his creative process. After imagining the structure of *The Far Journey of Oudin* as an authentic enactment of unconscious processes, he uses mask to observe himself as an agent of the transcendent signified of the fictional world, that is, the author as an agent of the unconscious.

1. The Circle Re-entered: Wishrop, Mohammed and the Other

In our first introduction to Oudin we are returned to the structure of *The Palace of the Peacock* in which the postmortem perspective of narrative is linked to cycles of regeneration: ‘Oudin knew it was still a dream, the dream of a heavenly cycle of the planting and reaping year he now stood within — as within a circle — for the first time’ (*Quartet* 123). Oudin’s vision constitutes a ‘new freedom’ afforded by a transcendent perspective that looks upon the material ‘in’ the eye of the corpse. As with *Palace of the Peacock*, death and life appear as interpenetrative polarities and place the identity of the body and dislocated consciousness within a dream narrative structured from ‘within a circle’. Because the circular structure is expressed through a new identity and death at a later point in history, the collective unconscious is imagined as a cyclic continuum in time and space. Hence the analogy with seasons of planting and reaping which also indicate that the Guyanese landscape has been tamed.

To Mohammed, Oudin represents an ‘essential link in a chain and a plot directed at his heart’s ambition’ (149) because he resembles a ‘half-demented half-brother’

murdered by Mohammed and his brothers to thwart his inheritance of their father's estate. With the death of the father and the killing of the half-brother, Mohammed and his brothers, divorced from all sense of connection to the past, become an 'end and a beginning in themselves' (162). Their identities 'end' in the sense that they are no longer connected to their father's remote and foreign religious tradition, but they are bound to each other by their guilty silence — an unspoken contract. The killing is a 'womb of subversion'; that is, their criminal conspiracy allows them to redefine their identities and agency in the material world, but it also represents the beginning of new psychological conditions of guilt and mistrust.

The image of an 'essential link in a chain' and plot suggests that Mohammed subconsciously acknowledges his actions as not only criminal, but also subversive. He feels himself caught in a process of causality that will ultimately destroy the ambition which forms the core of his sense of being. The image of an 'essential link in a chain' also recalls the 'dragging chain' heard by the narrator in the Palace of the Peacock. This suggests Mohammed's psyche is linked to the collective unconscious.

The narrator of *Palace of the Peacock* intimated that Wishrop was an exception to the resolution of the crew's psychic experiences in the unconscious. Wishrop had died 'clinging to the spokes and spider of a wheel' (80) later to enter the Palace of the Peacock, but his death made him like a 'changeling demon' and left the taste of a 'forfeiture of self-annihilation' (81-82) in the mouths of the other crew members. Unable to accept self-surrender, he desires to remain within the cycle of life and rebirth, symbolized by the spoked wheel. Wishrop's 'transubstantiation' and attachment to life would drag the crew 'into the future on the wheel of life'. As a result of the interpenetrative nature of the unconscious, some of Donne's traits have combined with Wishrop's self-interest:

. . . the music of the peacock turned [Wishrop] into a step . . .
like the grace and outspread fan of desire that had once been
turned by the captain of the crew into a compulsive design and
blind engine of war. His feet marched again as a spider's
towards eternity, and the music he followed welled and
circumnavigated the globe. (115)

The memory of Donne's 'compulsive design' has combined with Wishrop's attachment to life, inducing him to march again into the material world to find an 'unchanging fortress and life'. Wishrop's inability to accept self-surrender and the interpenetrative architectural structure of the unconscious have become a condition of Mohammed's psyche and the source of Mohammed's 'new dreaming architecture and house' (162).

Through the fissure in Mohammed's unconscious, the intangible architecture of the Palace resurfaces as a fantasy mansion in which Mohammed imagines he can live in isolation. His 'heart's ambition' is to create a mansion he only dreams about. It has windows like 'coloured glass stuck in a church' (150), but he is unsure whether the windows are to 'accustom his eye to a settlement of darkness within, or to veil the world with a living darkness without': either the windows conceal his guilt from the world, or they allow his guilt to be projected upon the world. In either case, though the structure is derived from interconnected experiences, the windows symbolize a desire for isolation — an inversion of the windows of universal community in the Palace of the Peacock. Unlike the vision of universal community in the Palace, yet similar to Donne's fantasies of a ruler of the landscape, Mohammed desires a home that reflects ego as totality and defends it against subconscious feelings of guilt associated with Oudin.

The 'half-demented half-brother,' is an echo of Donne's double-sighted 'brother'; that is, the narrating alter-ego of *Palace of the Peacock*. The alter-ego represented universal compassion which Wishrop negated in order to maintain his sense of independence. Rejecting the unconscious means that he rejected resolution with the other. A condition of Wishrop's desire for independence is that the projection of other be manifested again. Wishrop's resistance to transcendence is a condition of Mohammed's psyche, involving imagining the other that is feared as a sign of inauthentic self but a necessary dichotomy for conceiving of the subject. Mohammed kills his half-brother because of this unconscious association. However, Oudin comes to be associated with the other, the half-demented half-brother, in Mohammed's unconscious. Thus, Mohammed's fantasies make him dependent upon someone who is a constant reminder of a murderous action that will always indicate the invalidity of his claims to a lawful inheritance. Whereas Donne was led to a vision of transcendental architecture by his projection of the other, Mohammed's projection ultimately draws him away from

making a material reality of his dream mansion. Oudin cannot be banished because, like Donne in need of the Amerindians, Mohammed needs a servant to achieve his fantasies. Secondly, because he is associated with the half-demented half-brother whose murder persists as a memory in Mohammed's unconscious, he cannot be banished from the psyche.

Hounded by guilt, paranoia and feelings of persecution, he turns to drink and dissipates part of his inheritance. To replenish it he negotiates his niece, Beti, as a bride to Ram. Beti's identity is reduced not so much to a commodity as to a form of contract binding two estates together, but Oudin abducts her before a marriage can be ratified, effectually stealing the means by which Mohammed could realize his dreams and seal his future. Mohammed pursues Oudin and Beti but fails to find them. In his emotional turmoil he fails to recognize that he has pursued his own projections and his consciousness streams wildly with associative images in his last drunken moments. As his perception of the forest and an attacking bull combine with memories of a past attack by his father's bull he imagines himself as a crawling 'fluid spider' (231); an allusion to Wishrop as a 'spider walking to eternity'. As a predetermining condition of Mohammed's psyche, Wishrop can be viewed as Anancy, a spidery trickster figure. However, Mohammed's emotional turmoil and death are not the end of the 'womb of subversion' that was conceived by Mohammed's venting of Wishrop's need of the other — Mohammed's estate falls into Oudin's possession through his marriage to Beti.

2. Ram, Beti and the Womb of Subversion.

Following Oudin's death at the beginning of the novel, Ram hounds Beti for a contract he had made with Oudin when he was alive. His pursuit of Oudin's fortune via the 'scrap of paper' becomes an obsession that consumes his life: 'Suppose is me life Ah sign away and you drop and lose it?' (129) The contract is ultimately invalidated by Oudin's death unless Ram can secure written proof of transferred ownership, but Ram's desires are frustrated when Beti secretly consumes it. Because Beti is illiterate, erasure is her only way of using language as a tool for defining her own identity. While consuming the contract secures her material independence and preservation from Ram's control, it

is also associated with Cameron's Eucharistic meal of fish in the previous novel: 'Beti saw . . . like the fish swimming before her eye, a passport to the depths of hell' (136). The erasure not only fails to defend her from Ram but binds her to him as he descends into a hellish crisis. Though she consumes the core of his symbolic life, leaving him frozen and irrevocably dispossessed of means to maintain a sense of self image and presence, the lost contract makes them dependent upon each other in their mutual need for remembrance of Oudin:

They were growing conscious of a presence whose apparent nothingness was more real and penetrating and commanding than anything they had ever known. (130)

Both minds are penetrated by 'apparent nothingness', the presence of Oudin's transmutation at the start of the novel. As neither Beti nor Ram had access to Oudin's internal experiences and realizations, their identification with him allows emptiness to be conceived in terms of an inversion of temporal and material dimension. The inversion is echoed in Beti's pregnancy to Oudin — a symbol in which different aspects of the novel are imagined united by a common bond of interpenetration.

Beti is pregnant with the child of a man who is dead, but whose identity resides within the living, making the pregnancy a symbol of rebirth and interpenetration of material and immaterial dimension. In death Oudin's identity is a more dominant force in the world than when he was alive. His ascension from being a servant without origins to progenitor of a blood line contrasts with Ram's 'misery of impotency' (132). The pregnancy is also a heraldic symbol of the 'womb of subversion' created by the brothers; through marriage to Beti, Oudin's child is heir to Mohammed's fortune. Oudin is dead but his identity remains as a potent and effectual symbol alive in body, mind and law.

The formulations of interpenetration and emptiness in the first novel are repeated, but contained within the individual's unconscious and merely awaiting an identity conflict in which to be realized. Unable to accept Oudin's death, Ram gives up sleep to maintain a vigil over Beti. Oudin's identity consumes his waking life, which becomes 'Oudin's unsleeping watch' (133). Ram imagines the contract as a covenant with a 'reality beyond him or an appearance of life and death within and around him'. It is as if

the contract not only binds him to the identity of Oudin, but in effect makes him Beti's surrogate husband watching over her welfare.

Ram recognizes the disintegration of his identity and independence when he sees his reflection in the 'obsession and depth' (137) of a river. He imagines the slices and fragments of his reflection in the water as a banner 'unfurled over the grave of Oudin' like a victory flag and 'symbol of rebirth and death'. Ram's reflection is that of Oudin as an 'absent hero whose sliding proportions are a mask of spirit rather than Ram's fading personality'.² As spiritual mask and 'hero' associated with a Eucharist and a covenant with a 'reality beyond', Oudin is conceived as a Christ-like figure — one who is resurrected after death — and it is with this image that Ram identifies. Ram's experience of disintegration parallels Oudin's experiences in the swamp at the end of the narrative: 'Oudin looked wildly and foolishly all around, as if he had been found out for the "double" he was, the murdered heir . . .'. (213). Like Oudin, Ram is caught 'in a curious suspension in which everything he possessed was gathered and adopted by someone other than himself' (137). Ram identifies with Oudin's experience of being Mohammed's half-brother; that is, Ram identifies with Mohammed's projection of the other. Though he is afraid of becoming 'something other than he had always known himself to be', Ram is drawn into the womb of subversion and perceives that his identification with the other is 'a victory or resolution and triumph'. Like Donne's experience of self-surrender, Ram's self-surrender is a manifestation of a transcendent perspective and moral development, but unlike Mohammed, Ram is conscious of the change in himself.

3. Kaiser as Mask: The *Quartet* as Ethnological Fantasy

Kaiser proclaims a vision of unified moral and metaphysical structure that acts as a context in which to understand Ram's obsessional psychosis as a necessary experience within the evolution of the psyche through history. However, before Harris can use

² For future reference we should also note that Oudin is here referred to as a 'mask of spirit'.

Kaiser as a mask through which to announce the moral outline, his character must develop a metaphysical perspective.

After the subversive break with the father's traditions of myth, Kaiser interprets events in terms of newly arising theoretical languages. In accord with modern politicization of identity Kaiser views Mohammed as a 'cancer on the body politic' (170). However, dissatisfied with this impersonal definition of someone to whom he is emotionally bound, Kaiser's sentiments return to 'the old ground of fellowship' once 'the sudden emotional tide' subsides (170-71). The cause of this emotional ebb is initially imagined as a 'bitter invasion and attack from an incalculable and obscure source' — a subjective experience of emotion from an agency he imagines is external to his mind. Kaiser's disconnection and reconnection to Mohammed should be understood within the context of the unconscious prefigured in the first novel. During the moments leading to Kaiser's death and rebirth he and his brother Mohammed represent a resurrection of the previous double of Donne and a dreaming brother.

Kaiser and Mohammed enter a rum shop in which Kaiser later dies in a fire:

. . . everyone turned and stared, taken in the flashbulb of their own consternation and astonishment. It was rare that they revealed themselves like this, but the two brothers had entered so unexpectedly, without a warning and view coming across the bridge over the river . . . (171)

Why should it be necessary for the brothers to have crossed a bridge in order to get to the rum shop? In part, it creates an impression of the sense of a tangible location experienced by the patrons, but more importantly the river and its crossing is symbolic. It is not specifically representative of the river traveled in the previous novel, but is metaphorically a connected tributary of the unconscious. This is indicated by various details throughout the novel, the fish as a recurring symbol of Christ and transcendence being one example. The brothers are imagined as partly representative of the unconscious memory of the Palace, crossing over unseen into 'ordinary nature' (173), but where the mechanism of Donne and the brother in the first novel was subtly

indicated to the reader from the start, here a connection between two brothers is established 'without a warning'.

Mohammed and Kaiser see the patrons as reflections amidst spirits in a mirror stretching behind the bar. The mirror does not reflect the brothers, but the surprised patrons amidst 'spirits', that is, bottled alcoholic drinks behind the bar, but suggestive of spiritual entities. In this reflection of the community's gaze Kaiser recognizes himself and Mohammed as doubles of a previous family named Allaman who had killed an heir in the past. The sight of the patrons caught in a 'flashbulb of their own consternation' causes a 'flash of recognition' (172) in Kaiser. He recognizes himself as others see him — reflected in a myth which restates his alliance to the union of guilty brothers. However, it is not guilt by which he feels bound, but the myths which the community uses to construct the identities of its individual members. While Mohammed is motivated by unconscious forces of which he is not consciously aware, Kaiser becomes conscious of myth as a source of unconscious forces constructing the perceptions of others.

Like the crew of *Palace of the Peacock*, a spiritual double of a previous voyage, the actions of Mohammed and his brothers are preceded by similar events in a 'recurring myth' (172) in which the members of the community can recognize a reflection of themselves in 'light of a spirit — too technical for understanding'. Myths provide a medium through which the movements of the collective unconscious can be revealed to the community, but Harris here imagines his myth cannot be interpreted because it is too technically sophisticated. Kaiser is later used to provide an abstract of the underlying moral structure of Harris's self-mythologizing, but he cannot yet fulfill this function because his recognition of himself as a double is derived from local myths which are not reflective of universal conditions. However, the sound of a popping cork sparks unconscious associations. The 'flash of recognition' in which Kaiser identifies himself as a double is an internal event which occurs in the same instant that he hears the sound of a cork exploding from a bottle. In the instant that he recognizes the unconscious the sound draws him back to the external scene of the rum shop.

Kaiser's recognition of himself and Mohammed as doubles allows him to understand his previous sense of disconnection from Mohammed as 'a drawn twine and

thread of dreaming spirit, a tension and distance coiling within himself and stretching into ordinary nature' (173). Kaiser's connection to Mohammed as a 'coiling' internal 'thread' of 'spirit' recalls the opening of the first novel:

A shot rang out suddenly, near and yet far as if the wind had been stretched and torn and had started coiling and running in an instant. (19)

The shooting of Donne in the previous novel was a symbol of redressing the projection of the other and death as the start of the bifocal vision of narration. Whereas in the previous novel, the actions of characters had been reconstructed as memories within the collective unconscious, in Kaiser they remain as memories 'coiling' within his unconscious and erupting at the sound of the popping cork — a repetition of the gunshot that signaled Donne's death and the creation of a double perspective.

As a repetition of a gunshot, the sound of the cork released from a bottle is a symbol of death. It not only recalls Donne's 'death', it prefigures Kaiser's and suggests Mohammed's eventual surrender to alcoholism. The drowning-like quality of Mohammed's drunken death is also a quality of Kaiser's 'death' in the burning rum shop:

Kaiser's eyes started to close against his will, until he was unable to tell whether it was Mohammed who dreamed of the past and the future, or whether it was he, or whether it was Ram whose name swam within the river like torn scraps of waste paper. (177)

Kaiser foresees Beti's devouring of a contract, Ram's identity crisis and Mohammed's associations of past and present just prior to his death. Kaiser appears to see the future effects of the womb of subversion.

As with the death of the crew in *Palace of the Peacock*, the death of Kaiser is a symbolic event. He ceases to be fictive physical presence acting in the environment, but his subjective perspective continues. However, his perceptions are of a world of interpenetrating events. The change in perspective is a symbolic event because it cannot be accounted for within the conventional perceptions of the living community. In this way, death again symbolizes entry into the unconscious as a dimension of meaning,

including and transcending the conventional definition of life as the perceptions of the living.

While his perceptions of himself and his brother as double indicate that in life he had recognized that unconscious processes are involved in society's use of myth, his premonitions during physical death indicate his entry into the non-temporal nature of the unconscious as it is represented in the twisted asymmetrical chronological structure of the novel. Kaiser's ability to imagine identity redefined within a structure of repetition is retained as a condition of his experience of the unconscious. He experiences two deaths, the first without reference to a specific moment of dying. His eyes simply 'close against his will' as if he were drunk, then he has premonitions and awakens at the beginning of chapter nine in which he meets two beggars. The use of the present tense remains consistent throughout. By avoiding changes in reference to before and after death, a seamless transition is made in which the death and psychic rebirth appear as a continuity of consciousness.

Kaiser's first death is a paradoxical image. One of the beggars — a Negro who 'had a few words of formal English' — is a double of himself. He recognizes the other beggar — a Hindu speaking in a frantic impoverished dialect — as his brother, Hassan, who had earlier been cremated according to traditional customs. In their following conversation, Kaiser's perspective shifts from that of independent observer to uniting with his double:

An hour ago one would have passed them without a word as though ages lay between one's self and them; now one's self had miraculously become the same. Kaiser shrugged his shoulders at the alien absurd thought . . . his feet . . . black with ink . . . sketched two curious faces on the ground . . . (179)

Here Kaiser imagines his feet as black as the feet of his double, but Harris reflects upon the paradoxical image. The previous indirect references to Kaiser as part of a repetition of the structure of the first novel is abandoned momentarily for a different experimental doubling.

The beggarly Hindu with 'frantic language' and the African with only formal English are figures through which Harris can imagine slavery and importation of

indentured labour as genuinely lived experience, rather than an event reduced to a matter of historical record: 'One felt it was criminal and wrong to let them feel one did not understand anything in their burning famished greeting and their sorrowful cry, that struck one to the heart' (180). But, in Harris's art, genuine experience is imagined as still alive in the collective unconscious and informing his symbolism and writing. In this sense the beggars represent a possible history of experiences that Harris has inherited through writing: 'An hour ago one would have passed them without a word as though ages lay between one's self and them; now one's self had miraculously become the same'. Reflecting on this transposition, Harris questions whether the novel as a Western art form could allow him to imagine the antecedent conditions of his writing: 'Kaiser shrugged his shoulders at the alien absurd thought . . . his feet . . . black with ink . . . sketched two curious faces on the ground, whom he addressed like a child *playing a foreign ethnological game*' (179; my emphasis). Though it is not the first instance in which the fiction is constructed from the author's personal concerns, this is the first instance in which Harris uses an individual character as an authorial mask.

The conceit is not forced. Kaiser merely finds an 'alien' thought in his mind and unconsciously 'sketches' the beggars: 'The unearthly hour made one dwell upon the freedom of a soul, pacing heaven, and sketching the fine branches of a delicate tree against the leaden sky with inky feet' (178). The 'one' here is the author meditating upon the freedom afforded to him within the process of constructing representation of character. 'Inky feet' suggests the very words of the text with which Harris can imaginatively 'sketch' possible branches of his own mixed and uncertain lineage: 'He drew his fabulous corollary and signature in branches and fingers of charcoal, and feet of cloud and ink' (179). The deaths of Kaiser and the literal meaning of image become 'wrapped up' in Harris's 'smoking words' — an idling experiment with metaphor in which he inscribes his own 'signature'.

The experiment initially seems to lead nowhere. However, a new 'startling' conception of authorial transposition has developed from viewing writing as an ethnological game: 'the unearthly writing on the sky acquired a new startling genius and hue in a spurt of unquenchable reflection that rose from the burning spirit' (180). Harris associates Hassan with Kaiser so that their contrasting views of transcendence can be

used to define his own relationship with the fiction. Their dichotomy is prefigured by the 'unearthly writing on the sky'. This is a reference to the smoke from the fire in which Kaiser dies, but also an allusion to Hassan's cremation: after the 'stubborn', 'spiritual' snaking flames died the smoke rose into the sun (167-68). Kaiser awakens from his first 'death' and is able to recollect the material circumstances in which he dies (the burning rum shop), but he also identifies his 'death' as a 'duplicate of Hassan's' (180). He then desires the freedom to die when and where he pleases, but is thrown 'inwards' to face Hassan as an aspect of himself. Kaiser's ability to recall the circumstances of his actual physical death and imagine a symbolic death are skills derived from his ability in life to imagine himself and Mohammed as doubles in the community's myths. His realization of the unconscious in life is a condition of his memories and a form of agency in the unconscious. This contrasts with Hassan as one whose 'stubborn' spirit persists in drawing Kaiser away from freedom and creativity.

The contrast is then used as the basis of a dialogue. Kaiser and Hassan discuss the conditions of their future rebirths. Hassan is determined to return to India, but as Kaiser points out, he no longer has knowledge of the necessary language and rituals needed to re-enter a Hindu society and would consequently become an outcast denied contact with the whole community. Kaiser is troubled by the possibility of a future confrontation determined by a lack of ability to adapt through mutual participation in language and custom. He opts for the freedom of being reborn as a pork-knocker in Cuyuni, Mazaruni and Venezuela. Hassan counters with an ideal he has read about — the ascetic Gautama's self-annihilation (182). This, the only reference in the *Quartet* to the historic Buddha, indicates Harris had some familiarity with Buddhism. Using Ram as an example, Hassan views the material life as redeemable in the belief that fear and love of materialistic avarice is too ingrained to be overcome. He instead opts for abstinence from the world altogether: 'Only the empty one, who no longer dreamt and sketched the vaguest desire, could kill the devil'. Hassan's ideal can be viewed as potentially damaging because of a fundamental self-involvement as extreme as Mohammed's. In his interpretation of emptiness the appearance of self and world are denied value, yet these have been the means through which Ram discovers unconscious reunion with the other to achieve a moral 'victory or resolution and triumph'. Kaiser's belief that time and

material experience will teach the undermining of obstacles to self-knowledge is affirmed through Ram's experiences.

Hassan's and Kaiser's evaluations of action are similar to two interpretations of the life of the historic Buddha which resulted in two major divisions in the practice of Buddhism. Hassan's view, encapsulated in his idealization of the 'empty one', is similar to mainstream Buddhism, derived from India and still practiced in south-east Asia. It is a tradition of asceticism concerned primarily with the salvation of the individual and based on interpretation of the Buddha as a human being who taught a path to individual salvation by way of self-denial. This form of Buddhism was defined as Hinayana ('small vehicle') by later Mahayana Buddhism ('large vehicle') in which the Buddha was imagined as an esoteric being and the world as a construction of the enlightened use of interpenetration. In Tibet and China the Mahayana developed the concept of the Bodhisattva who chooses rebirth out of compassion for others, though all parties are accepted as illusory. Kaiser's beliefs correlate to the Bodhisattva ideal; that returning to the world of interpenetration can be of positive benefit to others because it activates the deconstruction of obstacles that impede realization of self-knowledge.

The conversation between the brothers represents Harris reviewing the narrating alter-ego of the *Palace of the Peacock*. Donne's development was the initial affirmation of emptiness, and used as a basis for imagining an ego-less narration. However, the transcendent perspective which the narrator symbolized was derived from Harris imagining his own relationship to the unconscious as a transcendent signified: the egoless 'one' reflects Harris' own alter-ego. Harris utilizes the ascetic Gautama as 'the empty one' (183) to frame his use of personal-pronoun in the first novel. Originally, denial of ego was imagined the key to representing the transcendent signified, but upon reflection Harris became aware of the centralizing function of his own identification with the 'one' narrating and suspected that the novel was an egocentric structure after all. In response to this Harris approached writing as a form of play that would allow for experimentations such as the 'ethnological game' and use of character as mask with which to consciously observe himself responding to the fictive world he had created:

There was an esoteric yearning . . . and a . . . technical longing . . . It was this secret and this technical understanding, whose marriage could make life new and desirable again.

There is a science, Kaiser said, that can make a man crack his egg and fly. He had become a light-hearted, intoxicated soul. (183)

The 'esoteric yearning' that underlies *Palace of the Peacock* is married with Harris's 'technical understanding', that is, his techniques and symbolism, repeated as they are in the second novel. An escape from the hermetic 'egg' of the first novel is imagined possible now that the new 'science' of play has been discovered as a means by which 'a man', like Kaiser, like the author, can observe his actions. The 'ethnological game' was a spontaneous and creative flight of self-observing imagination which inspired Harris to include Hassan and in that moment writing appeared to inspire its own evolution.

Kaiser's second death is in fact a rebirth; he had died but his mind floated into the 'sky of the mirror that had grown veined like a tree' (181). The experimental genealogical tree that he/Harris draws grows out of the mirror that reflects the 'spirits' or character-masks of the first novel. The change from present to past tense indicates a point of revision. Reflecting on his experimental 'fabulous corollary' of an ethnological game and embedded self-representation, Harris saw that *The far Journey of Oudin* is determined by the structure of *Palace of the Peacock* — a growth of the previous textual mirror and a new reflection of a conjunction of the author's conscience developing within his creative processes. The fiction is imagined as a partly self-determining creative process in which authorial self-transposition has become an 'unquenchable' precondition of structure stemming from the first novel: 'the unearthly writing . . . acquired a new startling genius . . . in a spurt of unquenchable reflection . . .' (180).

In *Palace of the Peacock*, the transpositional action of identifying with structure was caused by identifying with the ideals represented in that structure: Harris wanted to express something of his sense of transcendence following the dredging of an anchor, and consequently identified with the narrator as a structure representing the unconscious as transcendence. This was egocentric, but it is considered unavoidable in the second instance because *The Far Journey of Oudin* is an extension of the structure of *Palace of the Peacock*. Kaiser's function as mask is imagined as a latent potential determined by

the preconditions of structure. Not only is the act of authorial self-transposition a means of self-observation, it is a demand of the structure of the fiction — the fiction itself is imagined as the inspiration for authorial self-observation. All of the characters, to differing degrees, contribute towards an articulation of the author's psyche, but Kaiser is a moral progression because the 'one' of the previous novel (Harris's psyche) is opened up to conscious self-observation, while the motivation for that process is discovered as an unconscious directive lying in wait in the mechanisms of creative response to the original novel.

To summarize Harris's use of Kaiser as a mask we can observe that the first intention was to use Kaiser to outline the structure in which Ram's identity crisis was to appear as a moral advancement. To accomplish this, Kaiser had to be attributed with an ability to view conscious life as symbolic within the context of a transcendent vision, but, as with *Palace of the Peacock*, Harris's own conception of what constitutes transcendence and subjectivity formed the parameters of all possible perspectives. Kaiser became suspended within Harris's conflicting regard for his own role in the creation of the fiction and conception of moral structure. He needed to use Kaiser to outline the motivations for a self-mythologizing structure that is 'too technical for understanding' and Kaiser's vision became another inscription of Harris's conception of the individual's relationship with the collective unconscious. In response to the condition of authorial transposition, self-representation developed as an applied condition and Harris consciously used Kaiser as a mask to observe his own responses to the moral vision underlying the structure of the fictional world instead of allowing the transposition of his ego to go unobserved.

While playing with the mask Harris discovered a 'new startling genius' and related himself to another character. Hassan allowed Harris to outline the ideals of the rhetorical 'empty one' of the *Palace of the Peacock* in terms of Buddhist metaphysics and the second novel as an evolution of technique and ideals. Because *The Far Journey of Oudin* could be viewed as an extension of the symbolism and structure of the previous novel the transposing of personal belief could be viewed as not merely a precondition but an evolving condition that could be subjected to further exploration. Harris next discovered himself reflected in Oudin's actions and then, disturbed by what he found, imbued this character with his own authorial emotional conflict.

4. Oudin as Mask: Exploiting The Other

The reader is never able to view Oudin as a fully rounded character, because through most of the novel his identity is prescribed by others. For example, Ram christened him in his own image as ‘Mussulman’ after he ‘materialized — to fulfill [Ram’s] reflective need’ (139), while to Mohammed he is a manifestation of guilt. Oudin’s experience of dissolution of self — his psychic death and rebirth in the ‘burial ground’ (212) of the pegasse swamp — is poetic, but somewhat unconvincing because there is little presence to dissolve. Oudin functions as a mirror which Harris uses to reflect the needs and fears of the other characters. As such he is a key element in the structure. However, as Harris uses character in this particular fiction to uncover his role in the previous, his use of Oudin also becomes related to self-observation. Oudin mirrors other characters, but Harris’s own motivations are reflected back in return. In a process of revision Harris inscribed within Oudin his feelings about the self-image he found reflected in him.

As a blank space in the text, symbolic images can be inserted in place of representation of presence: ‘One listens in vain, watching the phantom of the bush coming alive . . . it is never an accident when it happens. The concert is too perfect to be other than *consciousness*’ (213: original emphasis). Oudin perceives space as the ‘relentless opening and shutting of a dark silent window and door’ and he hears the ‘ubiquitous’ sound of a pistol shot (214). These references to ‘an opening and shutting window, and finally a pistol shot, link Oudin with previous structures of doubling related to *Palace of the Peacock*: for example, the sound of the pistol shot recalls the popping cork heard by Kaiser, itself an allusion to the shot that killed Donne . However, the ‘one’ composed of ‘perfect *consciousness*’ is not a reference to the narrator of the previous novel, but to Harris as an agent grown aware of the unconscious workings of the fiction discovered in the previous mask. Having realized that self-representation is a ‘relentless’ precondition of structure, Harris willfully inscribes himself in the narrative as the articulator of all unconscious conditions: ‘it is never an accident when it happens’.

After unconscious recollection of the windows in the Palace of the Peacock, Oudin finds it 'difficult to participate any longer in his intuition of a perfect One, whose creaturely nothingness he was': Oudin is identified not as part of an extension of the egocentrism of the alter-ego of the first novel, the 'empty one' described by Hassan, but as Harris's agent and an extension of self-representation ('whose creaturely nothingness he was'). However, he is also a double of the murdered half-brother. As a double of the 'murdered heir' he is Mohammed's projection of the other, itself an extension of Wishrop's needs. Harris self-consciously employs Oudin as an enigmatic center, a 'contradiction of states' (116), on which the many facets of the narrative depend.

Harris reviewed and consciously employed the empty space afforded by Oudin to express his own thoughts. For example, the language of Oudin's experience of transformation is not in character. Compared to Oudin's conventional verbal skills — 'Is where we get to?', 'Is where we reach?' (215), the language of his transformation is very sophisticated:

How could he hope to plant and invent a human brain and cosmopolis — of sublimation as well as nerves — and to ingrain it into the fibre of a race whose darkest crime and brightest destiny had long since ceased to count as something one must clearly discharge and accept for the relative fantasy it was? Yet if he was unable to do this, how then was he to rise from the grave of a world? (216-17)

Harris again assumes the personal pronoun to interpose his concerns directly into the text. Cosmopolis, sublimation, fibre of race, relative fantasy — the language, metaphor, subject and form of questioning is certainly not that of an uneducated Oudin, but indicative of a shift in narrative to an accordance with the values of the author. While Mohammed and Ram project their own versions of the other onto Oudin, Harris uses him to express a resistance to viewing the other as essentially a victim of the 'darkest crime' of colonialism. Certainly, Harris recognizes victimization, as was indicated in his ethnological game: 'One felt it was criminal and wrong to let them feel one did not understand anything in their burning famished greeting and their sorrowful cry, that struck one to the heart' (180). However, he understands that the exact effects of colonial

perception of the other, as a condition of the past, cannot be objectified in the present. Hence, the ethnological game is an 'absurd thought' (179).

To view oneself as victim of past conditions is a 'relative fantasy' that 'one must discharge' (217) from the psyche. This is another explanation of Kaiser's rebirth in Hassan to make a moral proclamation. Hassan viewed Ram as essentially corrupt, but Ram's resolution with the other through identification with Oudin suggested the psyche is changeable, proving Kaiser's belief that 'time will teach us to undermine every obstacle' (183). The ideal of value in rebirth, expressed through Kaiser, constructs the meaning of Book Three, 'Second Birth', in which Oudin's flight and psychic transformation, qualified by terms of death and rebirth, explains and develops the meaning of Ram's surrender to Oudin in Book One.

When Oudin asks himself how he is to 'rise from the grave of a world', it is Harris asking himself how he is to rise from an essentialising perspective. The answer, he discovers, is to readdress his own claims to essential qualities in himself as they are expressed in the fiction. This he does with Kaiser and Hassan, questioning *Palace of the Peacock* as an egocentric structure, but finding a use for further authorial transposition because it allows him to consciously observe himself. The self-reflection inscribed in *The Far Journey of Oudin* is motivated by Harris's attempts to discover his responsibilities for *Palace of the Peacock*. 'The responsible pole of gravity had been buried deep everywhere' (217). What then of Oudin's rape of Beti?

In his need to seal the structure of the novel, Harris, through Oudin, would have to commit to a figurative burying of the 'pole of gravity' with a 'blundering penetration' of Beti. The figurative rape is the only way that Harris could convincingly portray a sexual connection between Beti and Oudin, as her recognition of him as her abductor and uncle's servant makes him an emotionally distant object to be used and feared.

Oudin and Beti must be united by a sexual connection. Beti's pregnancy and marriage ultimately brings about the dissolution of Ram's identity which fulfills the moral structure, so therefore it is a demand of the structure of the novel. In this sense it is an action imposed upon the author. Even if the need for a connection is not Harris's conscious choice, it is his indirect decision as the fiction is imagined as a structural mechanism stemming from his unconscious motivations. Oudin rapes Beti because 'it

was what he had to do'; to do otherwise would be 'less than animal' (215). If Oudin does not perform the act he would be 'less than animal'; that is, he would not be behaving according to unconscious instincts ascribed to him by the author. The 'secret duty' involves Oudin in 'taboo', but Oudin is Harris's agent in the fictional world. Harris recognizes the irony of Oudin's subjugation to him: 'He laughed in an embarrassed guilty way with an air bordering on foul sophistication and inhibited glory and sexual wisdom that Beti did not understand . . . bells came tinkling again, and Beti realized Oudin . . . was not to be entirely trusted' (217).

Recalling the initial moment of Oudin's suspension in the swamp, we find that at some point Harris revised the text to include his reflections on his use of Oudin as an agent for abusing Beti: 'There is a sombre conspiracy in every line . . . a power so droopingly conscious of itself, so alert to stand and drill itself into a deliberate threatening constancy : . . one knows it is never an accident when it happens. The concert is too perfect to be other than *consciousness*. But a consciousness clothed with gloom and impending horror and despair' (213). The abuse is not an accident, but a 'conspiracy' present in 'every line' of text. Now, conscious of his power, Harris despairs the need for an horrific conspiratorial drilling.³

Harris imagines that rising from the grave of historical and historicizing condition involves imagining different histories as if acting them out, even if it means that his idealism appears to rest on incongruity. When Oudin feels that Beti is 'as heavy as lead' when he carries her in the swamp, we should understand that the burden is Harris's because he felt the rape to be a 'very bad patch' (212) in the structure. However, the horror Harris felt for imagining the rape 'ran neck to neck with a growing pity' (114) that led him to readdress it in *The Whole Armour* for a better diagnosis of his motives than is possible with the remaining major character of *The Far Journey of Oudin*.

³ It is possible that a rape was not intimated in the original draft: 'He felt he was betraying himself in doing this, since he dimly recalled he had made a pledge to leave her alone' (215). However, it appears that he revised it after conceiving unconscious motivations at the heart of the structure.

5. The Woodman as Mask: Self-Reproach

Oudin's rape of Beti unifies the novel. There is little need to trace events beyond this point because the structure of the novel does not evolve. However, his self-reflection incomplete, Harris introduces the Woodman to use as a mask to review his previous use of Oudin and Kaiser. Harris uses the 'rhetorical figure' (221) of the Woodman to confront his own responsibility for the paradox of using rape to complete a moral structure that risks becoming a devilish hallucination. The bells on the Woodman's bull, previously associated with Beti's realization that Oudin is a partially deceptive figure, signal '*a new, lugubrious, comical expression of stability*' and '*a sad conceit that the day of labour was at hand*' (219-20; my emphasis). The Woodman is partly a return to the conceit that structures Kaiser. This is indicated by his nickname, 'Kaiser' (231), and his appearance as one 'burnt and rescued from the ashes of a fire'. His reference to spirit as ink (222) recalls the image of Kaiser's double's inky feet. This suggests that the Negro that Kaiser anticipated as his next incarnation is like the Woodman. The Woodman has traveled and worked in Mazaruni and Cuyuni, living the life of a pork-knocker as Kaiser had chosen earlier, but the Woodman has not found the fulfillment projected by his former incarnation.

The Woodman had attempted to enact Harris's agenda, announced through Kaiser, of instigating change. He relates that he was once a teacher with a 'pure and simple heart for politics and the good of all', but he lost his position because of accusations of seducing a female student. This suggests he is also an echo of Oudin, but Beti does not recognize the Woodman as either her rapist or her uncle, though she intuits that he 'mirrored two lives, at least, in one' (221). Kaiser's ethos and the accusation of symbolic sexual misconduct that can be levied against Harris's use of Oudin are compounded in the image of the Woodman. The Woodman defends the 'evil romance' (224) as a political relationship in which he wanted to teach her a 'better way'. This is a reflection on using Oudin to violate Beti to establish the conditions of Ram's dissolution and validation of Kaiser's belief in rebirth as a moral action. Harris attempts to defend the figurative rape as a political necessity to achieve a moral vision. However, the moral

vision is also meant to justify his continuing inscription of himself in the fiction as an ethical practice — a justification based on authorial self-interest. As the rape was felt to be despairingly horrific (213), Harris finds the defense not only inadequate, but self-confronting.

Continuing to attempt consolidation of the moral structure and to placate himself Harris uses the Woodman to confess to Beti his own part in her subjugation. When she looks into the Woodman's face pressing down upon her she becomes aware of herself subjected to the structure of the novel: 'She felt the spirit of incurable pride . . . that counted and sold everyone . . . she was still a part of . . . a "trumped-up love" and old estate' (223). Though she cannot make sense of her vision, Beti is given the opportunity to view herself 'counted and sold' within the structure of the fiction; first, as a contract with which Mohammed could enhance his estate, and secondly, as the victim of the Woodman's 'trumped-up' love affair; that is, as the victim of the author's abuse. Despite Harris's attempts to enlighten her about her subjectivity, Beti turns to Oudin for protection, but this enrages the Woodman and he imprisons them in an 'insecure room'. Through the Woodman as mask, Harris expresses his frustration with an irresolvable problem: Beti must inevitably be returned to a relationship with a character the author has willfully used in a fictitiously immoral manner in order to fulfill the moral structure which he believes justifies his use of mask.

To vent his frustrations, Harris uses the mask of the Woodman to turn upon his previous mask. With threats spoken like a 'curious metaphysical perversion and conceit' (225), the Woodman accuses Oudin of deceit regarding a loan Oudin had set up for him with Ram, whose lawyer has sent a letter demanding early repayment of the loan. Oudin stands accused by the Woodman of creating trouble for him and leading to his being metaphorically 'strung up by [his] balls' (221). Harris imagines himself indebted to both Oudin and Ram for his use of their identities at the beginning of the novel, but also condemns his need to rely on Oudin for the rape. However, in an ambiguous way he acknowledges that he had instigated it: 'Had Oudin disobeyed his employer in any way?' (225) The 'employer' may be either Ram or the Woodman, but in either case it indirectly refers to Oudin's employment within the structure.

Having grown conscious of Oudin as an unconscious necessity that he now views as a reflection upon himself Harris creates a more elaborate mask with the Woodman. He reflects Harris's 'grandiloquent style' and makes 'the simplest story into something of far-reaching, dramatic significance, like a memorial excuse for his human failure, as if the grotesque lives huddled in a room . . . were deserving of universal attention' (225). The egocentrism of the first novel is again recalled as a 'human failure' memorialized with a second novel in which Harris's attempts to excuse himself only construct an irreconcilable conflict because of recreating egocentric structure. The Woodman reflects Harris's resultant self-condemnation: 'a simpleton . . . subject to every suspicion-and-persecution complex . . . a kind of inferior Christian fabulist [acting out] an insane longing to possess the purest, highest intentions . . .'. (224). In light of his use of the Christ image in the previous novel and his ascension to the role of a god manipulating characters as his agents in the fictional world, Harris views himself as an 'inferior Christian fabulist' motivated by a puritanical and obsessional paranoia with which he identifies himself 'placed . . . into the heart of appearances' in which characters are 'calculating demons . . . conscious of *him* as their enemy' (original emphasis). The condition of a 'suspicion-and-persecution complex' leads Harris to imagine the characters as if they are aware of his presence in the text — Harris as '*him*'; that is, God or an exterior transcendent signified.

For Beti, the relationship between the Woodman and Oudin is a 'fantastic jigsaw'; 'it seemed that one cruel face emerged, sometimes another, but containing all was a fascinating living house whose windows and walls crumbled . . . to erect themselves afresh . . . a cosmopolis of experimental life [dominated by a] constructive mystery, rather than an ultimate and dreadful representation and end' (225-26). Beti is unconsciously aware of the Palace of the Peacock ('living house of windows') as a 'dreadful representation'. As with Oudin before, the language ('Cosmopolis') is Harris's. He alludes to his failure to fulfill his responsibilities because of placing himself at the center of his experimental writing and becoming the 'constructive meaning' — his own ego is the basis of irony.

While the reader was confronted with the constructive nature of his or her actions in the first novel, Harris confronts his own in the second. The conceit provides Harris an

opportunity to self-mockingly include his self-suspicion, but it can also be used to formulate escape from self-doubt. When the relationship of character and mask involves a form of conflict it can form a dialogic relationship that shapes the course of narrative evolution: ‘ “. . . God knows how careful a man got to be if he want to do something ambitious. Mistress,” he pleaded, “there must be some way of sparking a new feeling . . . At the moment I real hard-pressed . . .” ’ (229). As God (‘God knows’), Harris uses his agent, the Woodman, to plead for a solution from Beti who, because of an ‘involuntary vision’, responds to the ‘insecure fearful creature’ by asking where the Woodman’s bull has gone. Recollection of the symbol of the bull is attributed to Beti, but the involuntary memory is a transposition of Harris’s own. While conceits allow the author to occupy a space in structure created by fictional identity and directly express personal values in the text, they also allow Harris to imagine characters indirectly responding to him through the mask. The dialogic relationship is of course a construct of the author’s imagination, but imagining different perspectives brought together creates the ‘sparking’ of ‘new feeling’, or emotional response to the fiction.

Harris next uses the mask to reflect his own consideration of how the bull contributes to a resolution of structural frustrations: ‘The man did not reply right away. The question had aroused more than passing interest . . . his ears turned to the ground and were listening. “Close you window at once”, he said sharply’. Instead of turning Beti over to Mohammed, whose death is later associated with the memory of slaying a bull (233-44), the Woodman offers his house as protection: ‘I going keep he in the other room’ (230). To compensate Beti, Harris contextualizes her within the Palace of the Peacock (‘close you window’) that represents Harris’s imagination. Both mocking and utilizing the Palace of the previous novel, Harris ironically rebuilds it in the form of the Woodman’s house of ‘insecure’ rooms in which he can construct a barrier between Beti and Mohammed. In this way, he can reward Beti for her services to the structure of the fiction by fulfilling her previous desire to escape Mohammed’s ‘brutal estate’ (218). This preserves the ostensible moral structure centered upon the earlier relationship of Ram and Oudin, but the reward is only a partial compensation. In *The Whole Armour*, Harris reviews the structural problems of *The Far Journey of Oudin* to consider the effects of his self-involvement. This necessarily commits him again to self-

representation. In the next novel, he views character from a greater distance. However, he continues to intimate his presence in the fictional world as if he were a god.

Chapter III

The Whole Armour: The Revelation of Instinct

1. A Bridging Dream and Jigsaw God

The Whole Armour develops from the authorial 'suspicion-and-persecution complex created in *The Far Journey of Oudin*. This is indicated by references to the previous novel within the dream that initiates the new narrative. The vision of the collective unconscious as a cyclic continuum is implied when Book One, 'Jigsaw Bay', begins with Abram dreaming that he is crawling both in a wood and in a tree:

Abram dreamed he was crawling in a wood — on the high branches of a tree — and had reached the extremity of a curious twisted limb. The leaves of the tree turned into black swooping birds, obscene and terrifying. He surveyed what appeared to be a beach beneath him, on which lay an . . . ancient *tacouba* . . . He knew he must jump but felt he would cripple himself in landing upon it . . . He sprang from his perch, meeting softer ground than he had expected, astonished to see the entire tree above him. (243)

The perspective of the dream is that of a floating consciousness surveying a landscape below looking for a new place in which to be reborn. The dream recalls images alluding to the previous novel, suggesting that the experiences of characters in the previous novel are manifested in Abram's unconscious. The old *tacouba* recalls the *tacouba* wood in which Oudin had raped Beti and Mohammed had died. His death had also been associated with images of Beti's ascendance as 'a bird taking flight over his head' (232): 'She was the bird of Mohammed's flying spirit that had returned to nest on its ancestral mystique and tree' (233). Pregnant Beti's 'twittering childish voice in the air' was Mohammed's last perception. Abram awakens from his dream with 'the cruel demented pain of a dying and bewildered man' in his chest: his subconscious is structured by

memories from Mohammed's unresolved psyche. However, these are combined with those of the Woodman.

The connection with Mohammed accounts for Abram's choice of home — a 'parody of a hut' on a isolated spit of land. As 'parody' the hut is an allusion to the inversion of the Palace in Mohammed's isolating 'dreaming architecture' and to the illusory rooms of the Woodman's hut in which Harris symbolically imprisons Mohammed and Beti at the end of the last novel. The events in Jigsaw Bay are connected to figures and ironic structures locked within an echo of the Palace of the Peacock.

Abram's dream is also a premonition of his 'crippling' involvement with Magda, a magician and his prostitute lover. The relationship of Abram and Magda is a revision of the relationship of Beti and the Woodman as mask. The figurative rape of Beti was a service to Harris, now reflected in the services Magda provides for Abram. Prostitution has taught her to recognize the sexual instincts of others. Her magic constructs the jigsaw-metaphysics of the *Whole Armour* and is an extension of Beti's perception of the 'fantastic jigsaw' of events in *The Far Journey of Oudin*, echoed in the name 'Jigsaw Bay'. In this sense, Magda is an incarnation of Beti, but, as an older woman empowered by sexual awareness, she contrasts with the naive young woman subjected to patriarchal and authorial abuses. Toward the end of the novel, Sharon, another young woman, represents a union of the divergent qualities represented in the virgin/whore dichotomy of Beti and Magda.

Magda forces Abram to adopt her son, Cristo, as his own by pointing at his face and saying 'I make it so. I declare it so' (248). Abram resists, but concedes to harbor Cristo from police trailing him for the murder of a rival for his beloved Sharon. The relationship between Abram, Magda and Cristo is symbolic of Harris's relationship to Beti and the Woodman. This can be viewed in abstract: Abram's dream and house indicate that he is an incarnation of the Woodman, and therefore represents Harris's conflict with Beti. Magda is an incarnation of Beti, and Cristo represents the child conceived by rape. When Magda points her finger at Abram's face we should recall that Beti had looked into the face of the Woodman-mask and saw her role and future defined by the author. Here, Beti incarnated in Magda, symbolically reverses the power structure

by pointing at the incarnation of Harris's mask and defining his role. By pronouncing it so, she orders the author through Abram/Woodman to take responsibility for the child he fictionally conceived through his agent, Oudin.

This pattern of linkages is symbolic. It represents Harris's response to the conditions at the end of the last novel. Abram's adoption of Cristo indicates that Harris envisioned himself as responsible for subjecting Beti to his own needs. Harboring Cristo allows Abram to experience an 'unfathomable' (247) leap of faith in Cristo's innocence. This stems from a 'self-reflection of ancient horror' which revises the 'horror and despair' (213) of rape in the previous novel. The mask in the previous novel was a means to a disturbing 'self-reflection'. However, Harris's sense of guilt is a symbolic regard of his role as an author. The horror he originally perceived in the reflection was mitigated when it was viewed as a structural need. If the structure is derived from his unconscious motivations, then it is imagined as motivated by the collective unconscious. Hence, the horror is 'ancient'.

At the end of *The Far Journey of Oudin* Harris had attempted to restitute Beti, but the compensation was envisioned as an inadequate ducking of responsibility. In *The Whole Armour* he imagines himself taking up responsibility for Cristo, whose name, in conjunction with the symbolic conditions of his conception and birth, indicates a parody of the immaculate conception of Christ. Harris's role within the parody is that of God as an unholy father.

Having observed his unconscious centralizing role in the construction of *Palace of the Peacock* and experimented with his authorial agency in the fictive structure of *The Far Journey of Oudin*, Harris consciously assumes the role of the transcendent signified of the fictional world. While it is a conventional practice for authors to create an omniscient narrator, the fictional events of *The Whole Armour* are consciously related to the author in the position of third-person omniscience. All concept of truth that can be experienced by the characters is related to Harris who is both self-consciously aware of himself as an agent exterior to the text while also reflected in the truths that the characters can experience. The structure of *The Whole Armour* is simpler than the previous fictions, but the self-conscious action of imagining the novel as an inscription from himself to himself allows Harris to envision both the conscious and unconscious

aspects of his psyche encompassing all of the parameters of symbolism, turning the narrative into a 'whole armour' in which to use mask without fear of reprisal. Harris even goes so far as to symbolize his own birth as a transcendent signified at the end of the novel — Cristo anticipates his son will be able to write the 'execution of the last fictions of time'. Harris attempts to conceive his psyche as the beginning and the end of reference, both alpha and omega.

2. Magda: Hiding the Tiger

As a 'parrot', Magda mimics the words and values of the community, but her illicit profession teaches her to understand sex as a universal and eternal principle of life: 'Is there anything stronger than mating and birthing in this world until you lose you dying self?' (247) Though she does not envision reincarnation or a spiritualized self, she instinctually perceives reproduction as an externalization of self in the material world.

Her defense of her agency is also intuitive. She peers through the windows of her home to see the sun keeping a 'vigil' and then urges Cristo to stand away from the windows in case he is seen: 'You want the world to see you?' (254). In connection with the windows, the sun as 'vigil' suggests the presence of Vigilance looking through one of the windows of the Palace of the Peacock. In another sense, she reflects Beti as a memory within the Palace of the Peacock in that the room is a reflection of the 'insecure room' of the Woodman's hut. She is both within the Palace and able to see it without. The Palace has become a symbol of Harris's imagination as an omniscient dimension in which all things are related back to himself.

Once again, architecture is used to express a vision of interpenetration, except that unlike the construction of *Palace of the Peacock*, Harris is conscious of himself as the beginning and end of meaning. His consciousness is imagined as having universal proportions. Harris opts to consciously create an egocentric vision, following the belief that egocentrism would be an unconscious condition of structure anyway. Continuing to make references to the Palace indicates the identification of personal imagination with the structure of the unconscious as it is presented in novelistic form. As such, the

unconscious life of the characters stems from Harris's conception of the unconscious as a transcendent dimension.

While Magda fears discovery by the police, she also attempts to hide from Cristo knowledge of the collective unconscious from which she draws power to control him. Magda suspects her son has killed Abram and imagines losing an heir upon whom she has constructed her life: 'She swore *her* child would have the chances she had never had. She had scrimped, and saved, and had her men to send Cristo to college. And now look at what happened!' (252) Her predisposition toward material security leads to self-pity rather than a genuine concern for her son's fate, but because her sense of eternal survival depends upon him she continues to hide him. She turns from maternal feeling to malicious accusation, framing her judgement as a question: 'I want you to explain the living truth. *You*, my son, kill a man old enough to be your *father*? Is true?' While she declares that she wants to know the truth, her thoughts marshal against him and she convinces herself that Cristo ran because he was blind with guilt. (We should note the conjunction created by the italicized '*you*' and '*father*'.) Magda fears her son contains the presence of his spiritual father; that is, the author, and that he will subvert her future by taking over his agency.

She cannot help writing her own version of events, and her theatrical performance appears more real than life, leaving Cristo 'bound and gagged' (255). He surrenders to the power of her inflexible drama, convinced that he cannot escape her theatre unless he condemns himself and plays the role she desires. Cristo accepts the price of a 'fabulous injustice of guilt' in order to escape local conditions: 'I shall tell you whatever you want me to say' (256). With these words, his mother becomes a stranger he must placate and abandon.

The 'fabulous injustice of guilt' suggests that Cristo's experiences are related to a new fabulous corollary in which Harris explores his own 'guilt' for the previous fiction. Magda accuses Cristo because she is suspicious of patriarchy (the male God/unknown author and men in general), a condition of her inheritance of unconscious association with Beti. Cristo is innocent of murder, but made to bear the accusation as a burden for the crime of his origination: 'His mother had become the womb of terrifying contempt and meaningless execution . . . he must constantly humour with a desperate pathetic lie'

(261). The 'womb of subversion' created by Harris's employment of Oudin has evolved into a 'womb of terrifying contempt'. The contempt is directed toward the author as the creator of Magda's condition. With his usual grandiloquence, Harris imagines the fiction as a terrifying judgement upon himself.

Magda attempts to hide Cristo from the unconscious as the subversive agency of the author she is unconsciously aware of, but binding Cristo to herself forces her son to accept the insanity of role play in order to 'clothe himself in . . . pretense'. This prefigures his later pretense as a tiger: 'he had begun to see a terrible and accusing mask in the place of flesh and blood' (253). Cristo must lie and conform to being rewritten according to her beliefs; however, this is the process in which he learns of the unconscious.

Enacting a pretense causes a fissure to open in his consciousness and his heart beats 'with a curious maturing resolution' as he begins awakening to the unconscious. Approaching Abram's hut, Cristo's nostrils become an 'unhinged sensitive gateway in his overlapping mind' (261). His senses are sharpened, not by any particular smell in the environment, but by the heightening of instinctual thought that results from playing a role or wearing a mask in the drama. The detail of the nostril alludes to Oudin moments prior to the rape: 'Something had be[e]n snuffed out of his nostrils' (214). This signals the beginnings of a subversion of Magda's possession of Cristo's agency: the spirit that left Oudin symbolically re-enters Cristo.

As an 'unhinged gateway', Cristo is associated with the doors of the hut, one of which is closed to the sea, the other open to the land. The doors suggest something violent has passed through the hut from across the sea to a land at the 'frontier between fantasy and the growth of a new settlement' (262-63). Cristo is the first to read signs of struggle with a tiger that has absconded with Abram's body, while Magda reads for signs of struggle between Cristo and Abram.

The hut is another inscription of Harris's imagination. Mohammed's architectural fantasy was a version of the Palace conditioned by guilt and self-involvement. The Woodman's hut of 'insecure rooms' was both another inversion of the palace and a symbol of the author's mind. As an isolating home and a shelter for Cristo, Abram's hut

is another version, but now a new element has escaped from the unconscious into the world — instinct represented by the unseen tiger:

“I have never seen the beast,” Cristo confessed miserably. “You ever see you mother with a man?” Magda spoke viciously . . . She was confronting him brutally and sceptically, “What I would like to know, Cristo, is how you know so sudden and uncanny and swift *tiger* been in here?” There was a savage wisdom and calculated suspension of unbelief in her manner. “I want to *believe* your inspiration was genuine, but I want you to tell *me* — how you happen to know so true?”

Magda has left the ‘tiger scratch’ on many men during her profession as a prostitute. When she refers to the tiger she associates it with her knowledge of sexuality normally concealed from the public eye. She uses the tiger as a symbolic image to test Cristo and discover if he has become conscious of his sexual instincts. The transformation of his nostrils and his intuitive reading of signs of violence suggest that he has developed subliminal awareness. The ‘overlap’ in his mind is of unconscious instinct erupting into conscience, perhaps a result of his months of isolation in Abram’s hut. Magda’s attempts to conceal the unconscious from Cristo and her ‘insane’ interrogation leaves ‘unhinged’ the ‘gate’ of his consciousness through which his instincts are let loose from the repression of community and convention.

The unseen tiger that abducts Abram is a symbol of sexual instinct, but is unseen because it is also symbolizes the rape of the previous novel as the unseen condition of the present one. The abduction of Abram, as an incarnation of a mask figure, can also be interpreted as a return to mask. Cristo later becomes a mask after he is made a double of Abram. Like Oudin’s entry into the womb/cemetery of the tocouba wood in the previous novel, Cristo picks his way through the sea as if he were a sleep-walking zombie to enter a process of psychic transformation. Magda forces him at gun-point to exchange clothes with the corpse of Abram. She is willing to take his life in order to force him to live as a projection of her identity. Threatened by her ‘natural corruption’, Cristo enters into a sense of a ‘living death’ (267), seeing himself as the corpse. Harris again employs doubling in order to destabilize reference. From this point on, the origins of Cristo’s

motivations and self-perception is ambiguous. He is Abram (unconscious memory and reincarnation of mask) and tiger (the untamed aspect of the psyche and symbol of rape).

3. In the Wake of the Collective Unconscious

A 'legitimate wake' is a social ritual that structures the grieving process of those mourning the dead: 'a little blood had been known to spill. Everyone knew — when this happened — they would feel all better the morning after' (299). Magda's wake for Cristo is a social ritual designed to heal a 'fissure in the ranks' (273) by rallying the community to union, but it is also a perversion of the ritual because as Cristo is alive, it is an illegitimate wake. Magda's deception allows her to hide Cristo and his knowledge of the unconscious, which would otherwise be a chink in the 'armour' of communal perception. The community's cohesion rests upon suppressing conscious admission of the unconscious, particularly of instinct, which would be 'tantamount to surrender to the jungle'. As the community wishes Cristo had been 'caught and tried' (274) anyway, Magda's deception of them as well as the police flows smoothly because it fulfills a communal desire for the 'foregone conclusion' of Cristo's death; a sacrifice to heal the 'breach' in the 'fable of history' (279), the myths that ensure continuity of social unity.

The ritual allows occasion for the community to put forward Peet, Sharon's father, to heal the breach. Peet alone feels the effect of Magda's knowledge of psychic connection when he enters her quarters and offers her money for her sexual services while she is preoccupied with her past experiences with Abram and generalizing upon male desire. Affronted by his solicitation, Magda holds him in her gaze — an 'invocation' that draws upon a 'force of reality residing within his own senses . . . a most grotesque overpowering instinct'. Peet instinctually grasps Magda's knowledge of the power of instinct because it is reflected in her recognition, encapsulation and overwhelming of his own sexual instincts.

Because of a prehistory in which Peet had tracked but failed to apprehend a tiger in the jungle (310-11), he imagines Magda attacking him as if she were a tiger and experiences himself as Abram's corpse being stripped by Cristo. As a tiger, Magda's attack is a symbolic rape of Peet's psyche. This reversal of the action of the previous

novel portrays Beti's experiences as a condition of the unconscious inherited by Magda as instinctual knowledge. She understands how to symbolically rewrite another person's identity.

Peet's psychic death and resurrection is associated with a tiger hunt from which he returned to find his pregnant wife ill. The tiger appeared to be a 'trickster' that leads Peet to suspect a 'tigerish conspiracy' in the world (313). The trickster-figure also suggests a rewriting of the Anancy motif in *Palace of the Peacock*. The African fable has entered Guyana through the importation of slaves on ships: 'flecks of tigerish foam . . . The glistening dim fangs sank into the bellying sail of his chest . . . the void held him now in its frightful jaws . . . the sea raced in the chattering teeth . . .'. (281). However, these experiences are seen from 'Abram's doorstep'. The tiger, as a rewriting of Anancy, enters through the doors of the hut that symbolizes Harris's imagination. Whereas previously the tiger signified rape, it now signifies a trickster-figure. Harris suggests that the rape of the previous novel was the result of the unconscious using his agency as author to perform mischief in the fictional world. The author is predetermined by the unconscious to be a trickster.

Peet can imagine a 'tigerish conspiracy' is at work in the world because he is subject to Harris's conspiracy: 'the void held him now in its frightful jaws'. However, he is not aware of the author/god, nor his role in Harris's grand deception of Magda. Magda's 'spirit-jumbi' (283) involved Peet in donning Cristo's shirt, repeating the form of ritual that forced Cristo to identify with Abram which created the previous image of interpenetration. In this ritual the subject identifies with the other as illusion. The experience of interpenetration leads Peet to conceive of himself caught in Magda's machinations: 'Peet returned out of he jaws of Abram's tiger' (282). The conditions of his previous involvement with a tiger as trickster allows him to intuitively deduce that Cristo had been subjected to a similar conspiratorial ritual, and that the wake is a manifestation of Magda's misinformation.

Re-entering the company of the wake-gatherers allows Peet to return to his identity and a conventional perception of time and place, but filled with a 'spirit of alienation', he is not sure that he is really there. Overwhelmed by Magda's recognition of his private instinctual life, his subconscious guilt for failing his wife and unborn child have allowed

him to envision Magda's conspiracy. In her anger at Peet's solicitations, Magda ritualistically sacrifices Peet, but turns him into a force that disrupts the false wake she had constructed to conceal her son.

4. Mattias: The Sacrificial Mask

During the wake, Peet encounters his future son-in-law, Mattias, who perceives the wake-gatherers as a 'chronic density and identity' (289). Mattias is aware of others perceiving 'something of self-denunciation and frustration in his expression' (290). This is the first indication that he is another mask with which Harris attempts to deal with the frustrations of the last novel. The mask is related to the community of wake-gatherers as 'riddling reflections': Harris uses Mattias to relate himself to the community at large.

Apathy defines Mattias's awareness of the community as a pretense: 'The truth is all of you . . . like to pretend to much. Or is it that you understand so little you cannot really begin to pretend about anything? I wonder' (291). He states the defining quality of Harris's representation of community. On the one hand, the community's members maintain individual identity through conscious claims of connection and relation to each other, but this condition limits their ability to imagine different social and cultural orders. This in turn limits their ability to relate to the unconscious depths of each other: 'He knew . . . (though they did not dream he did) . . . of an apparition combining the serial features of archeological and racial mystery' (290). This 'figure of speech' is the 'involuntary dreadful *conceit* of the wake' (my emphasis); the purpose of the wake is to reveal the unconscious to the community as an aspect of themselves as individuals.

The individual's compliance to the dominant definition of community reinforces individual inability to 'pretend' anything beyond the structure that defines the limits of his or her subjectivity. However, Peet is someone whose imagination is no longer normalized by community.

Mattias describes the sighting of a human-like tiger which Peet associates it with Cristo as part of the tigerish-conspiracy: "Cristo scratch the maiden pretty breast?" (291). Through knowledge of his own sexual motivations in his approach to Magda, he interprets the sighting of the tiger as the presence of Cristo as a sexual rival to Mattias

for the hand of Sharon. He then projects his suspicions upon Mattias and interprets the suitor as part of the conspiracy which he imagines is now focused upon Sharon, his only remaining child. Peet successfully antagonizes Mattias, summoning him to a 'new beating heart of possession and antagonism'. It is as if Peet, as a double of Cristo, is taunting his own rival and, like Magda, using his unconscious knowledge to test him for his part in the conspiracy.

Under conflict from the taunts, Mattias asks 'the most troubling question of all mankind — the meaning of individual innocence and guilt'. Through Mattias, Harris questions whether he need feel culpable for the abuse of Beti. The question of guilt raises a perennial question: who is fit to judge? Is involvement in past injustice and deception, as either victim or victimizer, grounds for objective judgement? This question was prefigured by Magda's demands of Abram and inquisition of Cristo. When she says to Abram 'Am I not the best judge?' (248), she asserts she is the best judge, but later condemns her innocent son. This is a symbolic pattern: a rape victim asserts her position as a vantage to judge the rapist and condemn the child born of the rape. However, Magda's assertion is also a question. Whether or not the victim should be the judge of the crime is as yet undecided. The belief that the author is an agent of the unconscious may mitigate the decision. If the author is predetermined to be a trickster, then the onus for deception need not fall on him personally. The deception is not only not conscious, but also an act that he is tricked into performing. In this sense Harris is both victim and victimizer: is he therefore a more qualified judge? Harris uses the wake to answer the question, but not before further developing Cristo as a symbolic representation of himself before subjecting him to the court of the wake.

'Caught' by the 'contagious shadow' of the wake's corpse resurrected in Peet, Mattias recognizes his identity is an entrapment that preserves 'dead' legacy. Mattias recognizes he is trapped in historical predetermination. As a reflection upon Harris, this indicates the view that the violence perpetrated upon Beti was not only structurally determined, but also a necessary instinctual reflection of the violence of past communities imaginatively re-enacted in the fiction. Like Mattias, Harris wants to undo the legacy of pre-history, both fictional and historical, by using the present novel to 'break the mirror of false accusation'. At the threshold of desiring freedom from

determination, Mattias fears surrendering himself to his 'fearful responsibility' within the 'parody of involvement'. This recalls the 'pole of gravity' of the first novel — Harris's acknowledgment of his sense of responsibility as the motivation that led him to create a structure reliant on a victimization of Beti.

To confront himself again, Harris creates another parody:

Mattias wondered if he had spoken his half-fantastic half-dreaming vision aloud. He did not know where the idea had come from, the incongruous linking of branches and names and identities in his mind in an involuntary serial way that made no sense to him whatever save as an inversion of prophecy (bringing difficult news from the past) and the reflex of an all-encompassing future in the curious bonds of the present. *He was dreaming*, Mattias tried to warn himself . . . bulging seed in a growing head.

Mattias is located within the 'branches' of Abram's dream — an inheritance of Harris's ethnological game in the previous novel identified as a 'reflex' from an 'all-encompassing future'. Harris almost cites himself at this point as the transcendent signified. He transposes his perspective as an author imagining using the fiction as a game, but recognizes that the transposition is a 'reflex' or determination of the previous novels. As if mocking himself, he acknowledges the fiction as a product seeded by his swollen egoism or 'growing head' and is confronted with another reflection of his own actions and ego:

So childish to have to remind himself again and again — in different ways and forms — of the folly of doing anything at all. Did it mean that finding that one had nothing to do was synonymous with not wanting to do anything save *wear one's mask* like a proud hopeless fault?
(294 my italics)

'Again and again — in different ways and forms . . .': Harris considers his use of mask. Is the mask really a need of structure, or is it that pride makes him feel a need to imagine himself as a victim to structure and the one capable of resolving it? Confronted with formulations of pride, Harris questions whether he really wants to change anything, and

uses Cristo to ask whether he has taken part in maintaining the ‘fault of nature and history’ by concealing from himself ‘the major opportunity and question of his life’. For Cristo, the question is the ‘riddle of himself’ and the answering of such a riddle entails a risk of ‘self-aggrandizement and self-delusion’ (294). The motivation behind Harris’s use of Mattias as a mask is to solve the riddle of culpability, but Harris still fears that the entire idea of relating himself so closely to the fiction is ‘self-aggrandizing and self-delusion’. The only way of avoiding that risk seems to be to abandon writing the fiction altogether: ‘Why not turn away, walk away, shrug off the haunted tree altogether’ (the tree here is an allusion to both the ethnological game and the tree trunk upon which Beti is violated [215]).

Harris then propounds an argument for abandoning the work. Mattias feels that ‘he could not hold himself responsible for the silly mess . . . of life . . . It was all too far beneath him to catch him. Until *now* . . .’: as an interpolation by Harris, this expresses the view that he need not feel responsible for fictional events because they are just that — fictional — and it is ridiculous to feel that he could be caught out by characters that are lesser than himself. Harris views himself as more important than the fictive events and, god-like, the characters appear as creatures below. However, this view brings him, through Mattias, back to the point of ‘profound participation’ in the fiction: ‘Until *now* . . .’. The italicization suggests that at the very moment of inscribing his doubts and argument on the page and viewing himself as the author of the fictional world, he viewed himself in relationship to the text before him and was drawn back to involvement in the fiction by a ‘burning curiosity about the walking tree and family of mankind’ (295). Harris cannot help but be curious about the ethnological fantasy he has perpetuated, because recognition of the motivations behind it offers the possibility of answering the ‘riddle of himself’. Harris resumes the position of the transcendent signified, but revises the function of Mattias in preparation for creating a dual perspective of his death — a mechanism developed with Kaiser and the ethnological game of *The Far Journey of Oudin*.

Mattias’s mind ‘revolves’ with a ‘disjointed upturned picture’: ‘a series of revelations, engagements and disengagements, each pattern appearing the very unstable antithesis of another and undermining even itself as it dawned’ (295). Mattias is

imagining the formation of the *Quartet*. Harris continues to project his actions as a writer through character, but now the mask is taken off and Mattias becomes a symbolic representation of the author: 'Mattias was held by this spirit of dislocation and hypersensitivity, a boiling scalding mask he had never truly suspected one ever wore'. Harris acknowledges his relationship to Mattias as hypersensitive and returns him over the 'bridge that stretched across limbo', back to the fictional world where he opens his eyes to find Peet confirming his presence: '*Now you really here*'. Harris's italics indicate that he identifies with Mattias as a symbol of himself, but Peet addresses Mattias in the belief that he is Cristo. The vision leaves Mattias suspended in limbo before the gatherers at Cristo's wake in which Peet, as a 'medium' (298), imagines Mattias is a participant in the conspiracy. Mattias symbolizes both Cristo and Harris — the son and the father. The real Cristo, hiding in the forest, symbolizes the Holy Ghost in this parody of Christian omniscience.

Peet accuses Mattias of being the feared tiger and a defiler of his virgin daughter. Mattias is the center of their ritual gathering: 'everybody been waiting for you'. A drum beats incessantly. Mattias has entered a ritual in which he is to be sacrificed. However, the sacrifice is portrayed twice. In the first instance, Mattias realizes the 'scope and nature of the devil's illusion and drama':

Mattias beheld the terrifying mystery of being accused by one's demented spiritual father (whose garment of cruel longing and grotesque responsibility had to be converted and to fall on a despised and hated pretender and son) of misdemeanours and crimes that would have been an intolerable injustice to anyone, committed to a relationship involving anything less than perfect insight and loyalty. It was the most fabulous unity . . . to redeem the relics of a crippled perspective.(297-98)

The accusing 'demented spiritual father' is Peet, but as a 'medium' he also represents Harris, the spiritual father of Cristo. The accusation of rape, inclusive of the tiger as a symbol of rape, is leveled by Harris in order that Mattias, as a double of Cristo, may be sacrificed in his place. However, Harris sees into his drama from two perspectives, as transcendent signified and as Mattias: 'accused by *one's* demented spiritual father'(my emphasis). Harris consciously uses his omniscience to turn against Mattias and act as a

trickster, but transposes the personal pronoun to acknowledge that his abuse of power makes him a 'demented spiritual father', but a God nonetheless.

He sacrifices Mattias to preserve son number one, Cristo. Harris accepts himself as the source of 'misdemeanours and crimes' in the previous fictions, but he is also 'committed to a relationship involving [nothing] less than perfect insight and loyalty'. He remains loyal to his original symbolic 'son'. However, accepting the charge of guilt would invalidate his previous conception of crime as structurally determined. To understand how the 'relics of a crippled perspective' (meaning the previous novels) are redeemed, we must look ahead to Mattias before the second portrayal of the sacrifice:

"You," [Peet] cried, his eyes seeming to look inward on himself, "You devil — you beast — I shall kill you." . . . Mattias suddenly understood in the way someone swiftly reads between the lines . . . it is not what one is saying in superficial reality one recalls and hears. It is what one knows one has been saying all along from the moment one has crawled out of the ancient egg . . . into a hatching tree . . . (314-15)

Harris again takes up the first-person singular, citing himself as 'one' to transpose his omniscient perspective. This is contained within the frame of Peet looking 'inward on himself'. Harris enters Mattias through the 'medium' (that is, Pete) to express his faith in the novels as a product of unconscious determinism. He has crawled out of the hermeticism of the 'egg' of the first novel and into the ethnological game; that is, he is consciously developing and extending the techniques and meaning of the previous novels.

Self-representation has been Harris's design 'all along', but only since *The Far Journey of Oudin* has he been conscious of it. It took a conjunction of two novels to realize that creativity expresses the relationship of the conscious and unconscious aspects of the self: the first to establish an unconscious expression of ego, the second to consciously use self-representation to realize that agency is unconsciously inscribed within the extension of structure. *The Whole Armour* results as a conscious re-enactment of omniscience in which the author's ego is the unconscious that animates the characters. The entire structure of *The Whole Armour* represents Harris's recovery from the

incongruity of *The Far Journey of Oudin* in which he was deceived into thinking he could resolve the structure by employing the other. Identifying with the rape, he discovered his unconscious as the source of deception. Initially, he had fallen prey to self-deception. Now he masters it as an art and turns it upon Magda — the incarnation of a fictional victim that left him with feelings of self-reproach.

To empty Magda of power, he need only prove Cristo's innocence as an essential truth to the entire community. This will free him from the need to hide, and his return to the community will be a public display of her deceptions. Harris takes custody of the spiritual son, Cristo, through the use of his double, Mattias. Harris does not use Mattias as a mask in the second portrayal of the sacrifice. Surrounded by the mob of wake-gatherers chanting for blood, the 'medium' (Peet) raises to strike Mattias, but Mattias dies by his own hand, defending Peet and Harris by extension. Cristo dies in the same position as the man Cristo was originally accused of killing. In this image Mattias's vision of a 'fabulous unity' is fulfilled. The gatherers 'intuitively' (315) realize there had never been an original murder and condemning Cristo was an unjust pursuit of retribution. The inadvertent self-sacrifice allows the community to awaken to its nature as 'sleeping vision' pierced by 'dramatic reconstruction'. They see themselves, with 'serial stupefaction', in the cycle of events in Harris's imagination and 'log book of the future' — the 'vantage ground' of the novel.

The symbolic death becomes a means for the community to realize its need for retributive justice is an injustice. They would have enacted a collective decision to banish instinct and fulfill Magda's objective to seal the breach in the community's sense of conscious order, but the ability to choose from among themselves a sacrificial subject becomes a display of their own intuitional knowledge, suggested in their 'snarling' faces. The wake-gatherers identify with the instincts they had wanted to banish. As their unconscious directives are consciously derived from Harris, symbolically they identify with him as their essential source.

Mattias, as a symbol of the author's presence, is sacrificed as retributive appeasement for Harris's use of Oudin — the 'one' who defiled Beti, the previous virgin bride. However, the doubling of his death allows Harris to plead his guilt and escape it also. Harris acknowledges the sacrifice of Mattias as a Christ-like martyrdom: he bears

‘the thorn of all dramatic reconstruction’, that is, he is sacrificed for the god-like author’s moral vision:

A startling awareness emerged, the undeniable spirit of truth that had entered one mind — in order to free the others — even in the midst of seeming death.

Mattias is a Christ-figure in that his death allows the community to realize the transcendent signified. Harris is the ‘spirit of truth’ outside of the text, but capable of entering the community through one of their own to unlock the unconscious within themselves.

The community’s recognition of the unconscious as a shared attribute frees Harris from judgement. The rape of Beti, the original virgin, was an unavoidable need of structure. However, although the structure was a conspiracy against her, it was an instinctive rather than conscious creation. If Harris as a self-conscious reader of his own work felt guilt, it was because he recognized the abuse, but now it is recognized as a product of imagining the self as independent of others. The present, as it is enacted in authorial transposing, offers a moral perspective or ‘vantage ground’ from which to view the past fiction. The same is true of judgement by others. To isolate one individual as essentially criminal the community must recognize what the essential motivation of his crime is, and the only way to understand what is essential is to understand what is universal. This demands that each individual recognize the immoral in themselves — that of which they are normally unconscious.

Harris’s final resolution of the conflict provoked by *The Far Journey of Oudin* is achieved by observing the recognition of instinct as a moral action. Instinct is imagined as an inherent unconscious condition that can be envisioned by reflecting upon a self-centered fiction. In this way, the fiction is imagined as both a justification of egoism and a mechanism with which to learn how to identify injustice. From this we can conclude Harris’s affirmation that one must follow one’s instincts, derived as they are from unconscious forces: ‘It is what one knows . . .’.

5. Cristo and Sharon: The Wedding and Birth of the Author.

As he dies, Mattias foresees a relationship between Cristo and Sharon: 'a lover in the arms of the universal beloved' (315). Cristo not only takes the place of Mattias as her fiancé, but later anticipates an account of the events of Jigsaw Bay in relationship to the prehistory and the future — the fiction Mattias imagined earlier. The union of Cristo and Sharon is a union of a mask with a female character, symbolizing the end of Harris's self-reproach and the completion of a 'fabulous unity' of structural self-representation.

Because of his isolation, Cristo has not learnt that the community accepts his innocence. Alone in the jungle, he has developed his intuition and identifies with their mythic tiger:

"They're still looking for somebody . . . upon whom they can pin the blame for everything . . . I haven't a shadow of a doubt they'll unearth the bundle of statements they collected the night I ran away. Thank God! One is no longer living in *that* wild fear and so one can come out and face them, whatever they do. They'll jump out of their skin, I tell you, when they see me . . . never before have they caught a dead tiger alive." . . . pointing to his striped bizarre coat. (327-28)

There is indication that he is also another representation of the author: 'they'll unearth the bundle of statements they collected the night I ran away. Thank God! One is no longer living in *that* wild fear'. Assuming the personal pronoun, Harris again speaks through a character and refers to his previous interpolations as a 'bundle of statements'. The statements are also those given to the police by the witnesses of Mattias's death, but in a sense their perceptions of the wake and sacrifice must reflect 'the undeniable spirit of truth'. Harris is inscribed either way and relieved that the battle with Magda and the accusation of guilt ('*that* wild fear') is over.

Harris forced Mattias to become a centering function to the community because as a double of Cristo, he could fulfill their need to recognize an unconscious source of truth. In contrast, Cristo willfully chooses to be 'one' who makes a show of himself to

consciously achieve a purpose: 'I wish with all my life . . . one could show them . . .' (333). Harris uses Cristo as counterpoint to Mattias. Cristo manifests the 'self-aggrandizement' which Mattias warned against and Harris enacts as author/God. Cristo is used as a self-reflection, but he ultimately surrenders his ego Sharon, a symbol of union of the female opposites of the fiction. Their relationship indicates a resolution with the use of the female characters in the novels.

Cristo imagines himself through the metaphysical as a superior ontology with which to reconstruct the community's vision. The 'responsible pole of gravity' (Harris's sense of social responsibility), Kaiser's desire for freedom (Harris's belief in freedom as a means to effect change), and Donne snapping the reins of his horse when he is shot in *Palace of the Peacock* (Harris's conception of the unification of self and other), are compounded in Cristo's desire to hold the 'reigns of responsibility and freedom' from a central point: "Pomeroon is the best place to be born to know this whole country, the whole of Guyana, British, Dutch, French, everything." He waved his hands'. Here, Cristo appears remarkably like the absolutist Donne at the beginning of *Palace of the Peacock*: 'He waved his hands at the savanahs, "to rule this. This is the ultimate"' (23). Cristo represents a self-righteous ego imagining itself as authority in the community's imagination. Harris fears that, like Donne, he may define his ego by excluding others: Cristo repeatedly silences Sharon while setting rules for establishing an independent 'here' (334) or sense of place.

Sharon sees through Cristo's 'boasts and sentiments' and realizes at the sound of what they imagine to be approaching captors, that he is 'as weak as she' (336). Distressed by the sound of a passing engine, Cristo finds comfort in an action as simple as placing his cold hands between Sharon's thighs and twice telling her he loves her.

Sharon, the 'universal beloved', represents a union of female opposites. Sharon is linked to Magda: 'It was a close gun and narrow escape. Her nail had ripped one cheek from eye to mouth' (309). Sharon has left the scar of the tiger on Cristo, indicating that she also is aware of sexual instinct. The gun refers to the one Magda used to force Cristo to her will. Cristo unconsciously recognizes his mother in her: ' . . . Why *you*, frail as you are . . . could contain [Magda] now . . .' (327). Sharon 'contains' Magda, an image of female agency, and Beti by extension — the female as victim against which

Magda was created as counterpoint. In the sacrifice of Mattias, Sharon served the role of representing Beti. Now hiding with Cristo in a hut, they echo Beti and Oudin in the swamp. This is suggested by Sharon's questioning of Cristo with 'What do you mean?' (336), echoing Beti's 'What you mean?' (222). The connection to Oudin and Beti is also indicated in Cristo's intuition of the strangeness of causality as it is presented in the novels: 'It's like when a man and a woman lie down together and make a myth . . . without even knowing it . . . Who is the parent of what in the long run? . . . A lot of strange things happen to bring us *here* . . . we're deeply together in *this*' (326). '*This*' and '*here*' may refer to their immediate circumstances, but the italicization suggests a reference to their roles in the structure.

Sharon is developed from a union of opposites — Beti (victim, virgin, naivety) and Magda (victimizer, whore, knowledge). As a unification of the divergent roles defined by patriarchal system in the middle novels, she embodies a canceling out of these extremes. Harris symbolizes his resolution with his use of Beti by allowing the mask figure to enter sexual union with her. Cristo, as mask, allows Harris to imagine his muse: 'She looked into Cristo's eyes demanding of him the uncanny penetration of her nature . . . Everything began to fade save the prospect of facing each other, drifting into each other's curious acknowledgment of emptiness as into the purest embrace and fiction of life' (339). The 'universal beloved' demands that Cristo penetrate her, but the embrace becomes a psychic one in which life and fiction conjoin to form a pure and empty psyche. Harris uses Sharon to mitigate the egoism represented in Cristo, but as a necessary inscription within him, he too must follow. Agency within the structure of the fiction and the agent without, Harris, are viewed together through Cristo's vision of the 'fiction of life'.

Through Cristo, Harris attributes his actions and the roles he has assumed in the fiction to Sharon as a representation of the unconscious as agency: 'your carnival, Sharon, not mine. I was . . . slave, rapist . . . anything you want to think . . . I really couldn't distinguish myself, who I was. I was lost' (344-45). A change is effected in Cristo who, 'ashamed of expressing and deceiving himself any longer', gives Sharon the tiger-skin. Cristo's return of the symbol of self-conscious claim to instinct to the muse of the unconscious symbolizes his recognition that conscious claims to personal possession

of the collective unconscious obstruct unconscious experience. The collective unconscious can only express itself when it is not a consciously desired objective of the creative process.

This does not negate Harris's commitment to a structure in which he assumes himself as beginning and end. The purpose of *The Whole Armour* is not to function as a frame in which to discover unconscious association, but to function as a seal against such eventualities in order to undo the trickster of victim-hood which confounded Harris previously: 'Cristo would be free in the end, it seemed to state, in armour superior to the elements of self-division and coercion' (352). Having symbolically redressed the Beti deception by deceiving her incarnation, Magda, and establishing his 'innocence' in the wake of the unconscious, Harris presents his resolution with the representation of women, confident that he can consciously unite a mask with a female character without fear of reprise.

Cristo anticipates the birth of a son while awaiting arrest and execution with a mind 'so empty it had become a frame for the future' (335). Now that transcendence of conditions is not an objective, he is permitted premonition of his future son's legacy, 'the appraisal as well as the execution of the last fictions of time' (348). The son Cristo is Fenwick in the next novel — the culminating symbolic authorial self-representation of the *Quartet*. Fenwick discovers the unconscious is a means to reconceive the relationship of present and past through atemporal fictive structure. Cristo's ability to imagine the symbolic representation of Harris constructs a peculiar perspective:

He saw the hour of execution approaching, superintended by the child's sceptical song. For at the instance of death he felt he would know that far back in its infancy the universe had been pointing to all he had visualized and loved. One would begin all over to perceive particulars of draughtmanship as never before — in the way one secretly observes (whether one knows it or not) a reflection in a mirror or a material portrait — by standing hypothetically outside of the dead time, with a capacity to make oneself perfectly aware and free.

Harris uses Cristo as a mask to describe himself in abstract. The *Quartet* is a 'mirror or material portrait' achieved from standing 'hypothetically outside of the dead time' — a hypothetical, God-like author standing outside fictional events. Harris recognizes his

actions, whether conscious or unconscious ('whether one knows it or not'), must be taken into account within the text if it is to function as a hypothetical mirror with which to appraise both himself and the fiction. 'Only five minutes more your father has! Sharon was crying' (347): true to her nature, Sharon intuitively understands that the end of Cristo coincides with the end of the fiction. This is approximately the time it takes to close-read the remainder of the novel, in which Cristo, in a final moment of conceit, is used to project the next novel before he is metaphorically executed with the close of *The Whole Armour*. As the self-conscious God of the novel, Harris uses his omniscience one final time to create a picture of future and past as a continuum by referring to *Palace of the Peacock*, *The Far Journey of Oudin* and *The Whole Armour* as the last fictions of time — the end of the prehistory of Fenwick's unconscious.

Chapter IV

The Secret Ladder

The protagonist of *The Secret Ladder* is a symbolic representation of the author at the end of writing the *Quartet*. Fenwick discovers the collective unconscious within the political climate of modern Guyana. The most obvious connection between character and author is that Fenwick is a surveyor in the Guyanese jungle, as Harris had been. Fenwick's familiarity with classical Greek tragedy is also indicative of Harris's own education in the classics. Yet, though a degree of intertextuality and recollection of life experience is evident, Fenwick is not a form of realist self-representation:

It is not really autobiographical because there are elements in imaginative fiction which transform one's immediate historical references and circumstances. Curiously, [*The Secret Ladder*] sprang out of events which occurred when I and this crew were working on the Canje River as surveyors . . . I had to cope with [Loy] who was undergoing a breakdown: he used to come to me and talk everyday about his problems and we'd spend time discussing them . . . [Two weeks later Loy shot Harris's replacement, Melville] . . . The whole thing haunted me profoundly and in a sense . . . Melville relates to Fenwick . . . When one knows one could have been shot instead of one's friend, had one remained there, these events can trigger off imaginative fiction. The shape and form of it becomes imaginative. It is not a history, it is not autobiographical.

(Wilson Harris interviewed by Michel Fabre, *World Literature in English* 12)

Harris does not deny the relevance of historical event, but states that they are transformed by the imaginative process. When asked if *The Secret Ladder* is autobiographical, he responds with a conception of the autobiography as a realist mode of representing a history of self. Though the novel is not autobiographical in this sense, it nevertheless reveals an evolution in Harris's self-concept developed from the symbolic

terms of the previous fiction. Harris relates his personal experiences to the collective unconscious as he imaginatively conceives it in the symbolic terms of the previous novels and in doing so, relates personal experience to prior self-inquiry.

The murder of Melville was a profound event and Harris imagined being in his place. This emotional involvement is addressed in *The Secret Ladder*. While Fenwick relates to Melville, Harris relates to Fenwick because of his sense of involvement with Melville and the circumstances of his death. This explains Fenwick's response to an attack upon one of his crew members when he is mistaken for Fenwick. At the sight of Chiung, whom he initially thinks is dead, Fenwick experiences conflicting emotions:

“It could be me lying here,” Fenwick thought. “What an escape. It could be *me*.” His mind turned into a sieve out of which everything fled save the mystique of selfish relief. . . . But now the overwhelming wave of blind obsession with himself began to retire and he felt sick with horror and self-contempt. The sensation of involuntary freedom was as automatic as the reflexes of panic and the springs which had moved his feet. (433-34)

While Fenwick and Melville may be related ‘in a sense’, they cannot be related in the above instance, as Fenwick is an observer who, like Harris, lives to imagine a narrow escape from death. Not only is the situation derived from life experience, but Fenwick's emotional response reflects the natural response of one who had escaped a potentially lethal situation at another's expense. However, Harris's response to the real life murder is related to the symbolism of previous fiction; ‘involuntary freedom’ and ‘automatic . . . reflexes of panic’ suggest the workings of instinct. As with the dredged anchor that inspired the first fiction, Harris finds real event acting as a catalyst for fiction that allows him to imagine the unconscious expressed in individual circumstances.

Fenwick's naming of his dinghy *Palace of the Peacock* is an obvious indicator that the novel should be read as part of a complete self-reflexive text:⁴

⁴ There are many indicators of textual self-reflexivity at play in *The Secret Ladder*. We learn, for example, that the novel is set after *The Far Journey of Oudin* when Jordan refers to ‘Oudin's Demerara/Abary savannah’ (p.363). The name ‘Oudin’ has become part of historical record in which his status as a landowner is used to name place. Because materialist objectivism continues to define environment, there is no record of Oudin's subjective experience. Yet,

Fenwick had named his dingy *Palace of the Peacock* after the city of god, the city of gold set somewhere in the heart of Brazil and Guyana. He liked to think of all the rivers of Guyana as the curious rungs on a ladder on which one sets one's musing foot again and again, to climb into both the past and the future of the continent of mystery. (367)

The name of the dinghy suggests Fenwick's psyche is subliminally linked with the Palace of the Peacock in the first novel and its subsequent revivals in various forms throughout the *Quartet*. Given the self-doubt expressed in the conceits of the previous novels, the naming of a dinghy after the city of god is self-targeted bathos. However, though Harris recognized *Palace of the Peacock* as an egoistic structure, self-reflection embedded in the previous novels allowed him to reclaim faith in his writing as unconscious demonstration of instinct. In this case, the dinghy can be interpreted as a symbol of refuge in a regained belief in the first novel.

Contextualizing *The Secret Ladder* by relating it to the previous novels is confirmed by epigraphs at the start of the novel:

There is in nature, a specific dimension of immaterial constitution which preserves its value in all changes, whereas its form of appearance alters in manifold ways.
(Mayer 354)

The 'immaterial constitution' is the collective unconscious which Harris imagines is rediscovered amid the previous manifold fiction. The next epitaph, by John Macmurray, recalls the relationship of self to other:

It is indeed an integration of the movements of the agent with the movements of the Other, so that in action the self and the Other form a unity.

In previous novels, the Other was that aspect of the self that is feared, whether a suspicion of a lack of presence, or a sense of guilt, and is projected on to another party.

Harris's recalls the figure of the other to suggest that events of *The Secret Ladder* are related to the prehistory of the former fictions.

This is replayed in Fenwick's apprehension of Poseidon, except he is the first character to understand that his own tendency towards projection is an archetypal tendency and a basis for perception of relationships in modern Guyana. Projection of the other is imagined as a principle guiding provincial communities whose individuals are unified within the universalism of the collective unconscious, regardless of the political agendas by which they define each other.

Poseidon and his congregation inhabit an isolated inland area along the Canje river near Guyana's border with Surinam. Their lives are not part of the calculations of the government who, concerned for the needs of the coastal farming communities, have sent Fenwick to the Canje to survey for a possible dam project. Because the origins of Poseidon's community are lost in myth and history, they base their sense of identity upon conflict with the forces that threaten their immediate environment. Anticipating a conflict, they claim ownership of the environment, a derivation of the absolutism of legal records with which they seek to proclaim their material independence. Conflict and land titles provide them with a means to project a belief in self as center of meaning, but if we recall the judgement of record and legal definition in the middle novels, identifying with an inherited definition of self as legal subject ultimately fails to account for unconscious life and the total human experience.

The major problem of Macmurray's epigraph is that it may lead the reader to an interpretation of Fenwick and Poseidon as, respectively, agent and other, however, these are cited as positions within a single unified movement. The characters must to some degree be an exhibition of 'integration'. Because the reader is only given direct access to one interiority, Fenwick's integration is portrayed through his realizing the unconscious. Identifying his own projections allows him to recognize that Poseidon and the congregation responded to events from a similar tendency to project the archetype of the other upon him. Whether or not Poseidon and the congregation truly realize a metaphysical perspective at the end of the novel is uncertain because the reader is not privy to their interiority. The events of the end of the novel are an interpolation given by Fenwick. The reader is ultimately left with little tangible experience of the Canje community other than his claim to intuitive experience of it.

Fenwick discovers the unconscious as the source of agency he struggles to grasp within his discrete subjective experience of events. Though connected to the collective unconscious outlined in the previous fictions, he is the first character who cannot only consciously reflect upon his inner life and realize identity and perception are constructed from archetype and inherited experience, but is also the first to be able to articulate this process. He has an active dream life, and unconsciously pronounces omen, but more importantly, his attempts to record the pattern of the fluctuation of river levels become a metaphor for recording the pattern of the unconscious.

Fenwick's development as a writer is indicated by the division of the narrative into three Books — 'The Day Readers', 'The Night Readers' and 'The Reading'. These titles make explicit the association of the survey project with Fenwick's evolving psyche. The titles refer to his objectives as a surveyor (reading and recording of water levels) and his crew's shift-work, but also to the recognition of the conscious and unconscious (day and night) before the narration ends with 'The Reading' in which Fenwick's interpretation of stories told to him becomes the perspective of narration. This suggests he evolves from being a writer of materialist record to one who uses subjective experience and personal beliefs to create a re-reading of events, and in effect symbolically achieves the imaginative perspective from which his story and indeed all of the *Quartet* is formulated.

Fenwick achieves a perspective which equates with Harris's as author. This indicates an objectification of the first novel. *Palace of the Peacock* was inspired by life experience and structured by a conception of the individual's relationship with the collective unconscious. This is repeated in *The Secret Ladder*. However, unlike the first novel, Harris does not attempt to deny characters as representation of actual living beings and, more importantly, he does not deny the involvement of his ego: 'How quixotic one was! Fenwick could not help smiling as if he had confessed to some weakness . . . in the face of some secret mocking enemy within himself' (367). In this use of 'one', we can see the narrator momentarily identify with Fenwick, but the narrator is ultimately Harris secretly 'mocking' himself from 'within' a fictional psychology and even going so far as to recall himself as the 'enemy'. Harris's willingness to connect the last novel to the previous fictions rather than making another attempt to create a

structure that negates individual ego, as was attempted with the first novel, demonstrates his reclaimed faith in interconnection between himself, the unconscious, and his writing.

1. Fenwick's Unconscious Inheritance

Whereas previous characters discovered internal conflict during the course of narrative, Fenwick begins as a conflicted psyche. His self-doubt is evident in his projection of his neurosis upon the environment:

. . . needing seven more feet to rise to the brim of the stelling; the river gauge shot three feet above this. Fenwick, the government surveyor, was looking up and it seemed an interminable way for the water to mount over his head. Still it could happen in seven days, he decided, adopting for no clear reason whatever the number that stood in his mind. The sky might suddenly declare to rain and fall. Who could tell what phenomenon and change would occur? He remained staring curiously as if he saw an introspective ladder of climbing numbers rather than actual feet and decimals placed on a strip of vulgar wood. He wanted to curse the glaring cunning of the receding heavens, the oppression of the everlasting bowl of the sun in the dense white sky. Instead he closed his eyes and his figure drooped a little in his narrow corial and shell of a boat. He opened his eyes and looked around him all at once again. The river was still save where his own paddle had broken the mirror and surface. All at once he leaned down and splashed the liquid extravagantly on his face to clear away all doubt of a concrete existence . . . He felt crushed by the overwhelming spirit of mockery and place and by his curious responsibilities. It was becoming increasingly difficult to control his discontented body of men. (357-58)

Fenwick's feeling of being 'crushed by the overwhelming spirit of mockery and place and by his curious responsibilities' seems a reflection upon the author's sense of responsibility for his role in the previous fictions. The 'suspicion-and-persecution complex' first expressed in the Woodman and later experienced by Mattias is now repeated in Fenwick's apprehension of a transcendent signified as external authority (the 'glaring cunning' heavens); divinity as an agency which, like the sky, is without

discernible limits, origins, or end. Fenwick's sense of authority is centered not upon a belief in himself as an independent agent, but upon a power imagined both invasive of his consciousness and also external to it, 'glaring' at his attempts at describing material changes in the environment as a state.

Under the gaze of a sky he imagines can 'suddenly declare to rain and fall', he physically shrinks from a desire to curse the sun; whether real or imagined, the concept of a judgmental agency encompassing his own is enough to inhibit his faith in the authenticity of his actions and ability to speak. Because of his fear of a transcendent will, Fenwick is passive in the face of confrontation with an environment and people to whom he is an outsider. He wants to 'shout an entreating command' at the sound of voices from the bush, but not only is he unable to exercise command, even though he has authority to do so, he is also unable to utter a single word. Throughout Book One, his desire to speak is negated by an inhibiting self-consciousness and self-doubt which contrasts with his later ability to become the source of narration. The 'spirit of place' he presently experiences is his lack of faith in personal authority and authenticity projected outward upon the environment which he perceives through the 'overwhelming' nature of his conflict. Unaware of his projection, he perceives the environment penetrating him, mocking him from within and without, and leaving him without strength of will to open his mouth in resistance.

As a government surveyor, his authority over the environment and his men has been legally sanctioned, and so authenticated, but it is a role that contradicts his character, and his sense of duty merely exacerbates his conflicts. His official duties place him in a stressful situation and unconscious thoughts ensue from the psychic fissure to become a dominant factor in his conscious life. This is evident in his inability to sleep, the increasing inexplicability of his dreams, irregular behavior and lack of focus upon his work. Hence his adoption of the water-gauge as a supporting external source of authority with which he attempts to center his life.

The gauge provides empirical measurement. It acts as a device for defining the dynamism of the material world which, once measurements are recorded, represents a claim on that environment. It is presumed to be a source of knowledge of place, yet its political function is to define place. For Fenwick, more importantly, it is an object upon

which he projects his own desire for center and wholeness, but which reflects his internal division in the form of a structure of symbols related to the events of the previous novels — events otherwise inaccessible to Fenwick's conscious experience of life and temporal location. For example, the unconscious process of association is initially given with Fenwick accepting 'without reason' the number seven as the number of possible days needed for the river level to rise above his head. Seven recalls the symbolic time scale of the first novel. Donne's seven day voyage from Mariella, associated with the biblical seven days of creation, was interpreted by the Amerindians as seven years of 'drought'.⁵ Here, seven, associated with a potential excess of water, indicates an end to the 'drought', or a completion of the voyage. This inverted revising of the symbolism of the original novel suggests *The Secret Ladder* is to be a watershed of the unconscious, imagined in the previous fiction.

The image of vulgar wood as an 'introspective ladder' of interminable progressive accumulation recalls the ladders that ascend the escarpment in *Palace of the Peacock* and the union of Cristo and Sharon as a 'fantastical sensation of a nail being driven into disintegrating wood' (336). The collapse of Cristo's desire to be a symbol of resurrection and transcendence, like Christ, follows Mattias's Christ-like martyrdom, which in turn follows the Christ-figure composed of cedar in Donne's vision and his desire to see the 'nail of moment', that is, the atom/stigmata — a desire for a first measurement that literally pins reference to an absolute. Fenwick's interpretation of the water-gauge follows repeated allusions to attempts to establish a relationship with the transcendent signified prefigured throughout the previous novels by cruciforms, references to Christ, the sun, the Palace of the Peacock, rivers and less specifically by images of animals and lightning. However, the gauge is an evolution of the previous images in that it is imagined as a ladder suggesting 'mortal ascent' and 'immortal decent' (464). As a metaphor, the ladder represents a passage from the immortal unconscious to the

⁵ "What does she say?" [Donne] demanded. "You know the blasted Buck Talk." . . . "They accustomed to move at this season, sir," Schomburgh spoke like a man making an obscure excuse. "Some kind of belief to do with the drought - once in seven year it bound to curse the land [. . .] "What's this to do with me Schomburgh?" Donne demanded. (53).

Donne had yet to learn that his seven day voyage is a post-mortem journey in the Palace of the Peacock. As the other (the 'Bucks') was derived from his own imagination, 'their' definition of the voyage as a 'drought' in fact comes from his alter-ego. It is everything to do with the idea of him-self.

conscious aspect of the mortal individual psyche, but, as a ladder can also be ascended, individual agency may effect a discovery of the unconscious as an immortal or transcendent aspect of the self.

Fenwick cannot ascend to the transcendent perspective of the unconscious unless the gauge serves to make him aware of his projections. This develops when it is destroyed by the congregation after his associations have taken hold. The recording device allows Fenwick to imagine transcendence centered in immediate conditions, but this center is removed. Like Mohammed and Ram, who had staked their hope of transcending mundane conditions upon contracts later invalidated, and like Cristo, who had to relinquish the skin of the tiger, the obliteration of a recording device leaves Fenwick without an external source of reference. He is left with the symbolic basis of his unconscious, but without an external device to order his experience of them, his objective of gauging water-levels turns into a gauging of the events he experiences in the Canje. The indeterminable 'secret ladder' of the collective unconscious is envisioned as the transcendent aspect, the 'introspective ladder' of his individual psyche; that is, his unconscious life is derived from the collective unconscious, but the collective unconscious resides in his individual psychic life and not as a dimension outside of the individual. This interdependence, forming a metaphorical 'secret ladder of conscience' (371), indicates that by the end of writing the *Quartet*, Harris no longer thought of the collective unconscious as a dimension separate from the subjective experience. On the contrary, it is the subjective experience in which the unconscious is revealed.

Fenwick's self-doubt and resistance to accepting himself as an authority indicate his unconscious knowledge of a lack of center, but ultimately he is spared entering the devouring experience of being double that previous characters have undergone because his profession as cartographer provides him with skills to imagine his experiences as symbolic. Surveying and mapping involve representing the experience of space and time with symbols. Fenwick's specialization in abstraction allows him to interpret experience through the safety of metaphor, symbol and image — tools with which he can treat experience as symbolic event and create distance and time for interpretive reflection. The attack upon Chiung, for example, is interpreted within his 'theatre of mind' as a prospective 'image of himself', a 'rehearsal of possibilities' that leads him to understand

his position in the social environment — a ‘critical, unstable corner of time’ (436-37). His ‘power to specialize and brood on minute particulars’ is a ‘burden of fascination’ because, as an act of the imagination, it is the means through which his unconscious internal conflicts enter into conscious view. His professional discipline provides him with the tools to imagine alternate possibilities of self-image, but as the rehearsals are associated with the projection of a transcendent signified, they form a ‘theoretical salvation of himself’ (434).

2. The Transcendent Signified as Archetype

Fenwick asserts that the survey is ‘for the general good’ (394). The survey is an attempt to reduce the living flux of the river to a single unifying written image as a statement with which the dominant factor of government, presumably East-Indian workers and rice farmers (385), will define ‘greater good’. This is a moral judgement as well as an economic one, and a definition of majority. It is a materialist project in which moral judgement is formulated relative to political priority and economic necessity, but, as Fenwick comes to realize, the survey is a reductive definition of the environment because it only takes in to account prior specified factors that do not include the experiences of the inhabitants of the Canje.

Subconsciously, Fenwick recognizes that the hydro-dam, though it may create an economic improvement for the coastal centers, is not a universally justifiable action. His assertions of belief in the project is based on a need to defend his involvement:

Jordan declared . . . “The news get around about the Canje flood project . . .” “You’re all a pack of fools”, Fenwick burst out. “I’m doing a plain job here. That’s all. I haven’t a ghost of an idea what use will ultimately be made of it all.” He pointed to his tidal graphs and notebooks “[T]hese poor farmers will be compensated. A jolly good thing too! The land isn’t all that rich up here — in fact it’s a mess — and they wouldn’t want to keep it in face of a scheme that would do untold benefit to the sugar estates and rice-lands of the Courantyne and Berbice coasts” — he found himself speaking as if he were recounting an obsession and a lesson — “which draw their irrigation supplies catch-as-catch-can mostly from an unaided

river now. Fortunately the Canje drains very slowly to the sea because the main and subsidiary watershed are broken and every tributary — as a consequence — is retarded and slow and ill-defined.” (381)

His commitment confronted, Fenwick becomes defensive and reaches for securities he is most familiar with — his writing, and the official reasons of economic necessity. However, he is not committed to the reasons he professes because as much as he adheres to official policy, his abstractions reveal grounds for doubting the certainty normally presumed of the empirical image he has been commissioned to create. His writing reveals a ‘broken’ system that is ‘fortunately . . . ill-defined’. Fenwick’s commitment to the project is not objective, but derived from a personal need for certainty that he realizes conflicts with the needs of others who struggle with the reality of the Canje. This conflict reveals his capacity for sympathy toward the ‘poor farmers’, yet swayed by his conscious use of rhetoric, he wishes to reassure the community.

The attack upon the gauge by local resistance both destroys the artificial center of Fenwick’s references and forces him into contact with Poseidon, who embodies the local community’s history because of his age and mythic origins. Unable to claim himself as center, Fenwick is initially derisive of those who do: ‘Poseidon!’ . . . an old bent artifice of a man . . . the tragic lips of an actor . . . galvanized into comical association’ (371). However, at their first meeting Fenwick associates Poseidon with the river gauge:

He could no longer evade a reality that had always escaped him .
 . . Fenwick could not help fastening his eyes greedily upon him
 as if he saw down a bottomless gauge and river of reflection . . .
 Poseidon had been hooked and nailed to a secret ladder of
 conscience.

The loss of the river gauge has left Fenwick without a center of meaning, so he fastens upon Poseidon to fulfill his desire, or ‘greed’, for a transcendent signified. The suggestion of being ‘nailed’ to the ‘secret ladder’ of Fenwick’s unconscious indicates that the projection of Poseidon as the transcendent signified is a psychological mechanism inherited from the development of Christ as an archetypal image in the

previous novels. Like Donne, Fenwick cannot communicate with the person upon whom he projects the transcendent signified. Poseidon remains other.

Fenwick claims to have 'understood Poseidon perfectly' (375) in their meeting, even though he needs Bryant to interpret for him. Though he knows his claim is a lie, Fenwick makes the assertion out of vanity. Bryant's ability to speak Poseidon's language forces Fenwick to confront consciously the fact that he cannot achieve a tangible connection with him as a human being, yet his identification of Poseidon is an internal event in his unconscious symbolism. As Fenwick has yet to realize that transcendence is a concept within his own psyche rather than a dimension exterior to himself, his conflict continues to hold sway over his conscious reasoning. The guilt he feels about the politics of the survey becomes entangled with his projection of a potential transcendent dimension:

The issue for me is fundamental and psychological. It is the real issue of genuine and worthwhile authority. To *misconceive* the African . . . is to misunderstand and exploit him mercilessly and oneself as well. For *there* in this creature Poseidon, the black man with the European name, drawn out of the depths of time, is the emotional dynamic of liberation that happened a century and a quarter ago. (385)

Fenwick's identification of Poseidon is erroneous, for he has no connection to the man. By stating that Poseidon is the '*misconceived*' African, Fenwick presumes knowledge of not only Poseidon, but also of an alternate 'well-conceived' African, when the reality is that he has merely failed to identify the unconscious projection that structures his logic. Due to his educated perspective of the end of colonialism in Guyana, he identifies the other as a political construct, but he fails to observe his projection of personal needs, that is, his psychological need for an external transcendent dimension that can be imagined as innately authentic. His projection of the other is an inverted enactment of the projection of a transcendent signified. Whereas previous characters had responded towards the other as someone lesser than themselves because of unconsciously fearing that person, Fenwick consciously asserts the other as someone

whose victimization is an authenticity that exceeds his own subjective experiences. In this sense the victim as trickster resides in his unconscious psychological processes.

On one hand, Fenwick recognizes the inadequacy of the project to truly take the lives of the people of the Canje into account as a living factor that cannot be made a matter of record. On the other, he perceives Poseidon as a representative of that culture subjugated by colonialism. Though he consciously wishes to recognize an injustice to the community, he nevertheless restates the writing of the other through a personal need for authentic center. However, though his tendency to projection has fixated upon a different object, associated memories are again drawn forth from his unconscious:

Something went tragically wrong then . . . Like an affair between a man and a woman gone wrong . . . And yet the affair is still fresh in our mind, and so it is not really finished . . . I admit I'm confused . . . You will forgive me for going on this way, I know. After all, a letter can be like a private conversation . . . And in any case I know you will enjoy my news when I have finished — it is like the plot of one of your beloved mystery stories. By the way, please do not send me any more books which are full of tragedies. My dreams are beginning to be coloured by the vision of the nameless horseman (Perseus?) slaying the cruel muse, to arm himself with the head of a Gorgon . . . This reminds me of Jordan . . . he would make a fine head for a prime minister and a governor rolled into one. (385-86)

Fenwick imagines Poseidon as the result of something that went 'tragically wrong' during the influence of colonialist expansion in Guyana and the pressures this placed on an 'affair' between a man and a woman. These details allude to previous relationships: Donne and Mariella, Oudin and Beti, Cristo and Sharon.

Fenwick's conscious thoughts are 'confused', yet his unconscious dream life is 'coloured' by investment of his imagination in Greek tragedy. These fictions regulate Fenwick's imagination with archetypal structures that open up his sense of association, allowing unconscious memories to infiltrate his dreams. His dream of a nameless horseman for example, is an intuitive recollection of unconscious memory of Donne's death re-enacted in the symbolic terms of the Palace of the Peacock. The nameless horseman slaying a muse in order to arm himself with an identity (the head of a Gorgon)

recalls the first scene of *Palace of the Peacock* which begins with a dream image of an unnamed horseman (Donne) shot by his mistress and muse, Mariella. This would suggest the first novel is a version of the story of Perseus slaying the Gorgon Medusa by avoiding her direct gaze with the aid of a mirror.⁶

More importantly, the confessional property of the letter is especially revealing as it suggests a subtle link between his mother and Sharon. If we recall the end of the last novel, Cristo had anticipated that his son born by Sharon, the 'universal beloved' representative of the unconscious, would be someone like Fenwick. Fenwick's mother has been married twice to husbands that have died. This recalls Sharon's marriage to Cristo who had awaited execution and her symbolic inheritance of a former marriage — Beti's marriage with Oudin. Fenwick's letter to his mother leaves him feeling he has been 'wrestling with another indigenous skeleton in the cupboard (quite unlike the black bones of Father Poseidon)' (386). Harris distinguishes the issue of Poseidon as other from the 'skeleton in the cupboard', the use of Oudin as other and rapist in the second novel, but the image of a mother-figure connected to the unconscious is still prevalent. Fenwick begins his letter 'mechanically' and his mother appears in his 'mind's eye' (384): 'he started his letter to her with her own rhetorical sadness'. This describes a process of automatic writing as a method of inducing unconscious thought, but that process is also imagined to be represented in the rhetorical structure of masks with which Harris realized the instinctive nature of his writing.

⁶ If we apply Jungian analysis to the dream, all of the events in it are symbolic of aspects of the psyche of the dreamer which in the case of *Place of the Peacock* was Harris, although figuratively the unconscious. In the dream of the first novel the positions within the myth are compounded. Donne intended to 'slay', or conquer the other in order to fulfill his self-image, just as the Perseus figure of the horseman in Fenwick's dream wishes to steal the Gorgon's identity. In this sense, Donne is Perseus and the Other is the Gorgon, but Mariella, the namesake of the misinterpreted other, killed the horseman/Donne before his identity could become the defining element of her community. In this sense, Donne is Perseus killed before stealing the identity of the other, the Gorgon/Amerindians. However, as the other was a projection only realized after Donne had originally drowned in the rapids, the dream of the shooting was a symbolic event in the unconscious. The slaying of the Gorgon correlates to the dissolution of the mechanisms enacted under the identity 'Donne' before it became the center of definition of the environment, just as the Gorgon was killed before it could turn to stone those who behold her gaze. In this sense, Donne is the Gorgon and the other is Perseus.

Donne can be interpreted as both Gorgon and Perseus, other and agent. Further, as a foil to the dreaming alter-ego, he is also a mirror used by the narrator. This recollects the mirror which Perseus used to avoid the Gorgon's direct gaze. As a mirror, Donne could be used to portray the other as self-projection without having to figuratively portray a figure correlative to his projections of the other.

The inter-penetrative nature of the relationship between Donne and his projection of the other is captured within the brevity of Fenwick's dream. Though the identities differ, a recurring pattern is represented to suggest that the collective unconscious, articulated through mythos and the regulating faculties of reading and writing, supplies Fenwick with a structure from the remote past with which to interpret himself. Like Donne, Fenwick is Perseus in that he uses Poseidon to mirror his own conflicts, his Gorgon as it were, just as Donne had intended to subjugate his own lack of presence by a symbolic capturing of the Amerindians.

Writing to his mother allows Fenwick to follow streams of thought and introspection that cannot be included in the formal writing of survey reports. Personal writing allows him access to the unconscious, which in turn allows him new ways of imagining his present circumstances. For example, he recognizes something in Jordan that he associates with the image of the nameless horseman, Donne, interpreted through the figure of Perseus. Like Donne, Jordan exhibits the qualities of leadership ('without his advice — I would be lost' [386]), but is also described as able to 'draw blood from a stone' — a reversal of the Gorgon's ability to turn humans into stone. At the same time, Jordan is like Perseus. Perseus stole the single eye and tooth of the Graiae, sister of the Gorgons, in order to extort information of their whereabouts. Similarly, Jordan is an intelligent thief: 'even if he's a thief, [Jordan is] eminently sensible'. Jordan is Perseus and the Gorgon 'rolled into one'. Fenwick recognizes leadership qualities in Jordan that he himself lacks, because writing allows him to interpret his situation through archetype expressed in myth and stories inherited from the past.

Reflection upon the qualities of his inner life allows Fenwick to acknowledge two ways of perceiving life — conceptual and experiential. Though he perceives his own life and actions primarily through the cultural concepts of political justice and economics with which he consciously categorizes others, he also understands that emotional life is instinctual and bound by biological needs such as sex and the need for food. From this, a dual sense of responsibility develops. Initially, he conscientiously seeks to fulfill his contract, but the invasion of his conscious life by the unconscious allows him to see that the reality of local condition, in which the inhabitants of the Canje 'wrestle with themselves to make a living within their uncertain ground which was continuously threatened by an erosive design' (368), is intrinsically linked to sexual and political affairs of the past. With the local as a living condition not represented on his charts ('He rolled his maps together, in despair' [388]), the 'unity of head and heart' becomes an 'inescapable obsession' (388-89):

Taking all circumstances into account, Fenwick saw that the extinction . . . of the Canje, and the logical construction of a flood reservoir . . . was perhaps the best thing that could happen to the country. On paper it all looked praiseworthy and

straightforward. But in concrete terms it called for an astronomical sum . . . the resurrection of Poseidon . . . and exposure of the buried community he represented whose flight from slavery had ended right here, in the ground, under one's feet. (388-89)

The material needs of the urban centers could be met, but only by exposing Poseidon and the local condition of deprivation as examples of past injustice still alive in the present nation. Poseidon could function as a key from the past with which to investigate the presence of deprivation in the present, but he is the product of an affair between a man and a woman; that is, a matter of sexual instinct that he could never hope to resolve:

Poseidon . . . is the emotional dynamic of liberation that happened a century and a half ago . . . Something was misunderstood and frustrated, God alone knows why and how. Like an affair between a man and a woman gone wrong . . . And yet the affair is still fresh in our mind, and so it is not really finished. (385)

The 'affair' is something that exists in a communal mind ('our mind'). As Harris discovered in the previous novel, Fenwick recognizes the presence of instinct as an inherited dynamic. Unconsciously, he describes a communal mind — the collective unconscious. At any point in his experiences, Fenwick might reflect upon the terms of his inner symbolic world and realize archetypes at work. For example, he continues to imagine Poseidon through the transcendent signifier. The price of finding out what 'god only' knows (the meaning of past events) is equated with a Christ-like resurrection of Poseidon.

Projecting his need for a transcendent signifier allows Fenwick to exteriorize his own psyche, but he is not conscious of the fact that he uses Poseidon as a mirror. Despite the potential for realizing the collective unconscious enacted in his thoughts, he is guided by his argument which addresses 'the real issue of genuine and worthwhile authority'. A desire for certain knowledge of a center of authority, within his own professional situation, but exterior to his own intuition, prohibits Fenwick from recognizing the projection of himself. Instead, centering his thoughts around Poseidon,

he becomes carried away with his rhetoric and the freedom of voice he did not initially have. His voice comes alive, but Poseidon cannot respond. This is not simply because he does not speak English, but because Fenwick's maintaining of projection leads him to a monologist thought process instead of inviting a dialogue.

In his need to thwart guilt and the accusation of injustice to deprived people, an implication of the political arguments he uses to justify taking his commission, Fenwick presses forward with his application of political concepts hoping to arrive at a solution that justifies his actions. Beginning with an accusation against Bryant, he continues to appropriate Poseidon as an image of historical archive for restructuring the contemporary political climate that sanctioned his involvement in the survey:

“You [Jordan] shout of freedom but . . . without understanding the depth of authority you can't begin to understand the depth of freedom . . . I know as well as you do, we've all been exploiting him”, he pointed to Poseidon . . . he stopped all at once feeling the inadequacy of his words, the sententious politics, the conceit, the cliché. (Might as well talk of robbing God . . . deceptions one loved to coin. Did they help anyone understand anything at all? Just as well he had surrendered his voice . . .). (395-96)

Fenwick stalls as he overhears himself and, entering introspection, begins consciously to think in the terms of his unconscious. He begins an interior monologue in which he confesses he is ‘appalled at [Poseidon's] condition’, viewing Poseidon as a denigrated figure. Because he believes he has recognized Poseidon, he imagines an ‘allegiance’ with him as a sign of the ‘rebirth of humanity’. Fenwick projects upon all humanity his personal need to feel the presence of the other as a center that validates his conception of progressive humanist values. He exhibits self-righteous moral indignation, but promptly recognizes that his logic is a ‘conceit’, an emotional burst of rhetoric which he cannot be sure is connected with reality as experienced by others. He tries to resist allowing his sense of self to become caught within the symbolic terms of his unconscious: ‘But surely this does not mean I must reduce myself to his trapped condition . . . a mere symbol and nothing more, in order to worship him!’ Again Fenwick articulates an image of Poseidon as resurrection, but his reduction of him to a symbol implies that he too occupies a symbolic position.

Fenwick realizes reduction of identity to symbol is a reduction of his claim to life, yet he cannot resist the reduction and 'smiles woodenly' because even his resistance to the unconscious is contained within terms symbolic of it. He begins speaking again, defining a place for Poseidon as the other in history. He imagines that Poseidon is a sign indicating the 'necessity for human freedom', but then stops, uncertain of what he is saying, conscious that each word he uses is like a nail. He realizes his need to defer and fulfill the symbolic grounds of his psyche is like a crucifix to which he would also nail Poseidon, but has not realized his psyche as a gateway or ladder to the unconscious. His misgivings prompt doubts, and he observes that his logic is derived from an internal event of self-projection, but though he recognizes his need to imagine Poseidon as a transcendent signified through which he might imagine absolute reference, he has not identified the unconscious as its source. His desire for an external authority reasserts itself, but amplified by his need for an explanation for the symbolic nature of his thoughts he interprets Poseidon as a god because he 'teaches us . . . guilt' and 'subservience to the human condition' (397).

Fenwick's interpretation of Poseidon, who has remained silent throughout, is entirely derived from his own psychology. First, he projects the archetype of the other, then self-doubt forces him to project the archetype of a transcendent signified. Once he becomes aware of this and the implication that he is trapped within a process of unconscious and self-deceiving symbolism, he resists making an idol of Poseidon. However, having become aware of the active nature of his imagination, he reasserts that Poseidon as a mirror has a transcendent function. Fenwick imagines that Poseidon teaches recognition of self-projection as the nature of all humans and he derives from this an interpretation of his actions as representative of the 'human condition'. He succumbs to his projection because he imagines it has a functional value as a means by which he can reflect upon his own actions to understand that he is subject to an unconscious condition uniting humans. Projection is now understood as a positive mechanism rather than a personal fault because it allows him to imagine himself related to something greater than his ego. However, he resists making an idol of Poseidon and attributes the tendency to idolatry to him; that is, to one he now intuitively understands proclaims himself as a signifier of transcendence to his community. Ultimately,

Fenwick resists accepting responsibility for subjecting others to enslavement to a conception of transcendent dimension derived from his personal need for an authority figure. In this action he takes responsibility for his own needs and at the same time rejects the attempts of Poseidon to enslave his community with claims of innate authority. Fenwick's perception of Poseidon equals a reflection upon the necessity of a *projected* transcendent signified as a means by which the individual can discover unconscious mechanisms in that relationship.

Where previous characters have pursued archetypal projections of the other and the transcendent signifier in the interests of self-preservation and self-aggrandizement, Fenwick has discovered these archetypes as a means to the reverse. He discovers these archetypes because they not only fail to help him transcend his individual conflict, but perpetuate it. However, this has a two-fold positive effect in that it teaches him to observe and take responsibility for his own agency, and he also imagines a connection to others as agents capable of assuming responsibility for their agency and connection to unconscious forces.

Poseidon has not heard Fenwick speak, yet Fenwick foolishly asks him why he has not responded. He leaves Fenwick feeling that he had 'not truly succeeded in emptying himself of everything'. A moment later, Fenwick warns Bryant that he (Bryant) will kill Poseidon. Inadvertently, Bryant's actions contribute to the death of Poseidon. The 'unequivocal gravity' of Fenwick's words indicate that he is right to feel he is caught in a 'dual net of ancient spirit and helplessness', because his acceptance of his agency is a catalyst for his psychic development in that it is the means by which instinct and intuition are expressed in the world. His warning to Bryant is prophetic, indicating that his psyche has become a form of agency that actuates change in the material world. Fenwick's perceptions of agency are unified with intuition, but he is not 'emptied' of everything because the image of the death of God, a modern archetypal image, remains to be enacted in the material death of Poseidon

Fearing a betrayal of his authority, Poseidon rises from his last supper with twelve of his disciples to attack Catalena — an act he anticipates allows him to 'live forever in the minds of his people' (457). Bryant's intervention causes Poseidon to fall and strike his head upon a bucket and he dies in the shadow of a horse, linking the death to

Fenwick's dreams. Bryant's intervention unintentionally brings about Poseidon's ignominious, but human death. This leaves an 'old man's grey body'. The display of Poseidon as a mortal reconnects him to humanity. This fulfills Fenwick's wish to kill, not God, but one whom he imagines would assume the role of a god: 'Taking all circumstances into account, Fenwick saw that the extinction . . . was perhaps the best thing that could happen to the country'.

3. The Integrated Vision: A Geometry of the Imagination

Fenwick's realization of his own projections allows him to understand that unfulfilled emotional needs are expressed in not only his tendency toward projection, but those of others also. For example his realization of projecting the other comes about by recognizing Bryant's projection of a need for an 'ancestor and judge' (459). His accusation to Bryant of an injustice to Poseidon is not only a realization of his own injustice, but of everyone's need: '*We've all been exploiting him*' (my emphasis). The relationship between Fenwick and Bryant is not simply one of employer to employee. Bryant intuitively understands Fenwick's interior monologue even though he could not hear him speak. This, combined with the prophetic nature of Fenwick's warning to him, indicates a psychological connection between them. Bryant is partly an image of Fenwick's alter-ego, but unlike *Palace of the Peacock* in which the alter-ego is a symbolic event within the collective unconscious realized at the moment of death, the alter-ego is this time a manifestation of unconscious connection in life.

Bryant is Fenwick's only access to Poseidon and filtered through his priorities. In his need to establish an origin for himself, Bryant imagines a connection of kinship with him. Both project their needs upon Poseidon, but Fenwick's inability to see that beyond his projections Poseidon exists as a human being, contrasts with Bryant's projection of himself as a physical descendant — a projection that imagines a relationship based on a faith in connection rather than conflicting fear and desire. Fenwick's conscious knowledge of lack of access to the other and to the public image of authority he believes he should portray, contrasts with Bryant's private access to Poseidon, who accepts Bryant's sense of connection and claims authority over his people. Their relationship

manifests the qualities of a state of consciousness Fenwick lacks — a faith that historical origins are self-evident in biological connection.

Fenwick learns of his own need for connection when he misinterprets Catalena's actions as turning to him for comfort and momentarily believes he can effect change in a fellow human's emotional state: 'Catalena Perez suddenly clung to him fiercely and Fenwick wanted to believe — half sleeping still in his exhausted mind — she had been transfigured by a sensation which bred the end of her terror. Actually he was deceived and carried away as he often was'. In Bryant's relationship with Catalena, a 'borrowed beauty' (417), Fenwick vicariously finds his needs fulfilled. Not only does Bryant enact Fenwick's discontent, expressed in his indirect fulfillment of the prophecy, but he also escapes into the jungle with Catalena at the end of the novel. Fenwick interprets this as a projection of the 'affair' of the past into the future because of his unconscious knowledge of previous relationships in the jungle.

Nearing the end of Book Three, 'The Reading', the final events are interpreted by Fenwick's unconscious knowledge and sense of tragedy and his perspective becomes the source of omniscient narration. At the sight of Bryant and Catalena, he 'deciphers' (452) their lips to intuitively understand that Poseidon has died, and the narrative becomes Fenwick's retelling of their experiences. For example, the congregation rape of Catalena is expressed in terms that recall details from Fenwick's dreams: 'There was only the dropping shadow of the mare whose tail fondled her breasts' (459). Fenwick associates Catalena with the mare ridden by Perseus in his dream and so, by extension, Donne and Fenwick. In connection to his dream of Perseus, Fenwick interprets Catalena as Andromeda (454), who had been offered by her father, Cepheus, as sacrifice to a dragon sent by the Greek Poseidon to destroy Cepheus's kingdom. In this sense, the congregation is interpreted as a bestial instinct. However, Fenwick also imagines Catalena desiring someone to 'wrap her in the dead man's garments, anything to be born to survive . . . ' (460). She is thus associated with Magda's rituals in *The Whole Armour*. Catalena's experiences, interpreted by Fenwick's unconscious, are related to a conflation of the symbolism of the previous novels and he imagines that she desires to be reborn, just as Sharon had been an incarnation of a Beti/Magda complex.

The conflation creates a perspective confounding the possibility of attributing details to Fenwick as a subjective perspective. Instead, his perspective is that of an unidentified omniscient third person narrator; that is, the author. This is explained with a metaphor:

Everything one thought or discovered or brought to light, Fenwick declared, was instantly plastered with the slime of spiritual parody, the parody of a universal and uncapturable essence. They must be careful not to lose a viewless conception in a deformed relationship . . . The pure paint of love scarcely dries on a human canvas without a modicum of foreign dust entering and altering every subtle colour and emotional tone, which affects the painter as well as the painted property of life (453)

Fenwick declares that the painter is affected by painting, that the identity of the artist is enacted in the act of creation. Here Fenwick is representative of Harris's process of self-conscious creation. He is plastered with the 'slime of spiritual parody': his unconscious is identified as a figurative allusion to Harris's attempts to imagine and define a relationship between his agency and the collective unconscious (the 'universal and uncapturable essence') in the previous novels, particularly with the 'spiritual parody' of *The Whole Armour*. Fenwick's discovery of Poseidon as his necessary projection of a transcendent signified can be viewed as Harris's reflection upon his own assumption of the role of God and manipulation of characters in *The Whole Armour* — projection extended to its limit to create a structural irony.

Harris also returns to the issue of rape. This time, he acknowledges his wish to defend the victim with an alter-ego, the 'ribs of Bryant' (459), but he also acknowledges that instinct cannot be captured or halted. Rape is this time imagined as a 'new model of *their woe*' (459; my emphasis):

. . . the sentence they wished to read was taken out of their hands. At the selfsame moment that they were beginning to execute a picture of the void in themselves, their world was peopling itself afresh, against their will, against their bitter intention. The phantoms moved in their mind . . . summoned by misadventure and involuntary will. (462)

Harris models the new rape ('the sentence was taken out of their hands'). However, the onus is not his own because the violence is imagined as inevitable and predetermined by history as it is imagined in the fiction. The psychological actions of both himself and the congregation are 'involuntary,' or unconsciously motivated by a structural relationship to the past novels. The violence of rape is mitigated. An act of physical penetration is not portrayed: 'Only [the congregation's] shadows touched her' (460). The congregation are both a body and 'void' through which instinct advances like a 'phantom' — the phantom of past self-deception, both authorial (*The Far Journey of Oudin*) and figurative (Magda deceived by her attempts to manipulate the unconscious/Harris). Their inheritance is a symbolic portrayal of instinct as a motif in the fiction: 'the distant conjoining of other limbs dressing in the borrowed darkness overhead. She was . . . praying crazily that someone would wrap her in the dead man's garments, anything to be born to survive' (460). In this image, the view of the sky as seen from the victim while on her back is connected to previous psychic conjoining, such as Abram, Cristo and Peet dressing in each other's clothes and forming a compound identity, the 'tigerish conspiracy', itself a 'limb' of the tree of Harris's ethnological game. The rape of Catalena is one more instance of structural motif expressing both instinctual violence and an instinctual will to survive.

The metaphysical vision developed in Fenwick's narrative is based on a union of his unconscious development and Bryant's story telling. This recalls the structure of *Palace of the Peacock*, but the relationship of ego to alter ego does not completely dissolve identities. Bryant and Catalena remain discrete identities within the story: 'Let the foolish lovers fly into nothingness' (463). Fenwick's alter ego escapes into the jungle with Catalena. This re-enactment of Cristo's entry into the jungle with Sharon, itself a re-enactment of Oudin's journey with Beti, fulfills the second aspect of the story of Andromeda in which Perseus (Bryant) saves Andromeda (Catalena) from the Dragon (the violence of the congregation). Bryant and Catalena have already returned to Fenwick with news of Poseidon's death, which is the moment at which his perspective becomes equated with the source of omniscient narration — their escape is a part of the symbolism of Fenwick's narrative.

Fenwick considers that, as a continuum, the unconscious cannot be completed. The drama must inevitably continue: 'It was childish to contemplate this unaccomplished funeral . . . Fenwick knew, rebuking every phantom in himself'. The 'phantoms' are none other than the characters within a 'theatre of mind' (436) — Fenwick's mind as a representation of Harris. As a representation of the author, Fenwick's statement indicates Harris's acceptance that he cannot bring an end to his portrayal of the scope of the collective unconscious within a single fiction, or even a collection of fictions, because it continually contrives new conditions: 'The law could not be buried, nor given to the dust. There were always copies and current records (since mankind began) of the covenant time would have stopped to imprison'. Writing is imagined as subject to the unconscious as a principle, or 'law', which can be recognized in 'all copies' — all archetypal images and instinctual actions reborn again and again in individual action and creation, including Harris's future writing. Through Fenwick, Harris not only states his belief in the collective unconscious, but also his resolution to it as an unavoidable condition of a creative process from which he can extrapolate aspects of himself but not extract himself. Hence, Fenwick awakens from a dream 'on the seventh day' — he awakens into an awareness of the presence of himself in a dream.

The 'seventh day' recalls Donne's seven day voyage from Mariella to the 'creation of the windows of the universe' (111) — the Palace of the Peacock. Fenwick's surrender to the collective unconscious symbolizes the conditions from which the original novel is derived and from which the causality imagined in the *Quartet* stems: 'The instant the prison of the void was self-created, a breath of spirit knew how to open a single unconditional link in a chain of circumstance' (464). Fenwick's omniscient narration is the 'breath of spirit' — the voice that articulates self-knowledge gained through recognition of the collective unconscious. His voice represents a concluding faith in the structure of *Palace of the Peacock* as the basis of the design of the *Quartet*. A 'chain of circumstance' recalls the 'unique frame' of a 'dragging chain of response' in *Place of the Peacock*: 'I well knew now to construct the events of all appearance'. Mohammed's sense of being caught in an 'chain and a plot' was the next symbolic link in the chain of figurative appearance that structure the *Quartet*. The sense of causality conveyed is one inclusive of not only *Palace of the Peacock*, but all the novels.

Fenwick is a symbolic representation of Harris as author of a literature in which the author's agency is determined by a structural relating of self to the unconscious. His psyche is determined by an imaginary process of return to the past as an explanation of the present. At the same time the present is a vantage point from which return can be imagined. The circular geometry of the 'secret ladder' of the *Quartet* is used as an 'inquisition' of the ego's involvement in the construction of fiction:

Fenwick was dreaming a very strange dream: it seemed that an inquisition of dead gods and heroes had ended, an inquiry into the dramatic role of conscience in time and being . . . The one chosen from amongst them to descend was crying something Fenwick was unable to fathom but the echoes of annunciation grew on every hand and became resonant with life . . . our end is our beginning . . . Fenwick awoke. It was the dawn of the seventh day.

The Secret Ladder encapsulates the project of the entire *Quartet*; an 'inquisition' into the relationship of the psyche and transcendent signified. The previous cautionary tale of Cristo as one who desired to represent transcendence is Fenwick's inheritance, however he does not repeat Cristo's initial fault of attempting to present the unconscious as a dimension exterior to or more superior than the community. Nevertheless, apprehension of a transcendent signified remains a necessary archetypal condition to which the individual must relate his or her self in order to investigate psychological limits. Nor is the archetype deactivated, whether discovered or ignored. It is imagined active regardless of conscious attempts to contain it: 'the echoes of annunciation grew on every hand and became resonant with life . . . In our end . . . our end . . . our end is our beginning . . . beginning . . . beginning'. The archetype of the transcendent signified remains intact, but not present or signified in an idolatrous image because it 'resonates' in every image.

Unlike previous dreaming characters, Fenwick awakens conscious of the scope of vision offered by his unconscious. At the same time, he is also the 'one' who descends the secret ladder of his own conscience. He awakens from the seven days of his experiences in the Canje as if equipped to abandon his survey and instead 'breathe' an 'unconditional link'; that is, he is equipped to write *The Secret Ladder*. Fenwick is

symbolic of Harris and, just as the *Quartet* represents Fenwick's unconscious heritage, it also symbolizes the author's. This brings Harris, his text and the reader full circle in a return to the annunciation of the 'one' in the first novel: 'our end is our beginning'.

Though not an autobiographical figure, Fenwick's psychological development indicates Harris's reassertion of faith in *Place of the Peacock* as an authentic instinctual mechanism through which to view subjectivity related to the collective unconscious as a transcendent signified. This completes the dynamic, self-reflexive structure of the *Quartet* — a fiction that mirrors Salkey's description of Harris's 'remarkable intelligence' as 'concentric mazes'.

Conclusion

From Allegory to Annunciation

In the narration of *Palace of the Peacock*, 'I' is a symbol of transcendence of ego. As the vision of transcendence was limited to the parameters of Harris's imagination, the novel could be interpreted as a structural assertion of conflated self-image and egoism. Confronting doubts about the veracity of his initial attempt to negate ego motivated Harris to observe his agency enacted in the structures of the subsequent fictions by self-consciously using mask as symbolic self-representation. Harris imagined the conditions of his agency in the present could be reshaped by imagining different histories or 'ethnological games' and using them as structures for reinterpreting his subjective experiences. However, he discovered his use of mask as a necessary demand of a structure relationship between *The Far Journey of Oudin* and *Palace of the Peacock*. He also discovered a structural incongruity when he identified with the violation of Beti through the use of Oudin as a mask.

In *The Whole Armour*, Harris responded to the problems of the previous novel. As a response to the necessity of self inscription and the problem of identifying with fictional conflicts, Harris adopted the role of author as God in order to imagine himself as the transcendent signified of the fictive world and the responses of characters. In this way he could preserve himself from identifying with character as victim. In contrast to the previous fiction, Harris inscribed himself as a God and conscious trickster to portray the victim's self-righteousness as a form of self-deception. In the sacrifice of Mattias and the union of his double, Cristo, with the Sharon, Harris accounted for his actions. The sacrifice was used to portray judgement of self and others as an expression of unconscious identification of instinct, while the union of Cristo and Sharon represented the identification of female characters as unconscious constructs of inherited stereotypes. This framed a warning to himself of the dangers of literalizing the relationship between conscious perception of the unconscious and the collective unconscious itself.

Ultimately, he reconciled himself to the belief that his actions as a writer reflect unconscious forces he recognizes in society: his exploitation of the other is a common projection (*Palace of the Peacock/The Far Journey of Oudin*), judgement of guilt is a historical construct (*The Far Journey of Oudin/The Whole Armour*), his desire for a transcendent signified is archetypal (*The Whole Armour/The Secret Ladder*). To achieve these fictions Harris imagined the ego as a necessary starting-point for creating the conflicts in which the unconscious is expressed. This allowed Harris to revise his faith in the first novel. *The Secret Ladder* represents a return to *Palace of the Peacock* within the context of the self-observations of the middle novels.

In a sense, Harris failed to avoid using the word as a 'tool of identity'. However, the identity that is ultimately asserted is of one who discovers his responsibilities in relation to the unconscious. In this way the *Quartet* can best be described as a form of allegory. The issue of responsibility can be seen as early as the first novel: "“And somebody,” I declared, “ must demonstrate the unity of being, and *show . . .*”". The earnest tone is comparable with 'one [who comes into] confrontation with a of invocation whose freedom to participate an alien territory and wilderness has become a necessity for one's reason or salvation' (*Tradition, the Writer, and Society* 61). When Harris refers to himself as 'one', he is referring to an image of himself that equates with Fenwick's genius. The personal pronoun used in dialogue by characters allowed Harris to interpolate his identity into the text, projecting a space in which to reflect on his motivations and beliefs before finally concluding with a symbolic representation of himself.

Harris is indeed, as Gregory Shaw argues, a 'presence within his own myth', but to argue that it is the presence of a messianic 'high-priest . . . victim' and 'prophet' ('The Novelist as Shaman', *The Literate Imagination* 141) is to attribute a negative bent to the value of reconstructing the psyche through personal allegory. This negative view could only result from so great a dependence upon Christian accounts of the transcendent signified that it manifests an obtuse inability to respond to individual experience — an action that not only isolates individuals from one another on grounds of conscious belief, but also isolates individuals from self-knowledge, from discovering means with which to discover themselves. The rejection of individual myth presupposes that transcendence is

the monopoly of a single religious discourse. This completely misses the point of Harris's use of writing to discover grounds for experiencing connectivity and value in the subjective imagination.

In his description of the relationship of the individual to Christian myth, Northrop Frye asserts that a distinction is to be made between literary and religious metaphor on the grounds of effect:

. . . the literal basis of faith in Christianity is a mythical and metaphorical basis, not one founded on historical facts or logical propositions. Once we accept an imaginative literalism, everything else falls into place: without that, creeds and dogmas quickly turn malignant. The literary language of the New Testament is not intended, like literature itself, simply to suspend judgement, but to convey a vision of spiritual life that continues to transform and expand our own. That is, its myths become, as purely literary myths cannot, myths to live by; its metaphors become, as purely literary metaphors cannot, metaphors to live in. This transforming power is sometimes called kergma or proclamation. Kergma in this sense is again a rhetoric, but a rhetoric coming the other way and coming from the other side of mythical and metaphorical language.
(*The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* 17-18)

Frye describes the Christian faith as literally meaningful within the context of Christian mythology. A transformation of values and patterns of recognition occurs within the imagination of one who faithfully enacts the structures of myth through imaginative literalism. The psyche appears to become connected with the metaphysical, as it activates the structure of myth. Both internal experience and external world appear to accord and the individual experience expands in meaning. However, Fry also asserts that unlike the purely literary metaphor, the religious metaphor contains and transforms the self and establishes a new identity from which issues a rhetoric which proclaims the transforming power of the myth as proof of the spirit .

Frye proclaims vision as a positive aspect of imaginative literalism in that it transforms and expands our sense of life, but concludes that only religious myth provides effectual metaphors to live by. Yet whether interpreted as a product of the

unconscious or reduced to a personal fantasy, Harris similarly developed a vision that effectually transformed and expanded his perception of the context of subjectivity. His is not simply a myth for himself to live by, but a course of creative action that involved him in personal analysis. The result was not simply one of literary effect, but of a pragmatic means to investigate unconscious mechanisms.

Like the Sutra and the mandala, the fiction is not simply a product of the imagination for the entertainment of the imagination, but a means of investing the imagination in a moral program. The 'one' inscribed, even after the possibility of claiming conscious-self as the primary source of agency is voided, remains as a sign of responsibility for former actions and proclamation. Like religious kergma, Harris's proclamation is also imagined as coming 'from the other side' — not from God, but from the unconscious. A capacity for imaginative literalism may, to positive benefit, allow the reader to not only identify in him or herself the archetypal processes Harris describes, but to also develop strategies for creative reading.

Ultimately, he reconciled himself to the belief that his actions as a writer are reflective of the unconscious forces he recognizes in society; his guilt is a historical construct, his exploitation of the other is a common projection, and his desire for a transcendent signified is archetypal.

Imaging his actions as a writer within the context of the unconscious ultimately extended to a challenge to his sense of agency, and the possibility of a conventional claim of authority over his work. Within his non-fictional work Harris at times attributes his creative process to remote sources available through writing as an intuitive engagement with the unconscious. In a seminar given at the University of Cambridge in 1989 Harris states that the collective unconscious operates in his writing method:

A judgement began to secrete itself in the work I was writing because of the ways in which I revised the work as I wrote it . . . as I was doing so I would discover there images that seemed to have been planted by another hand, and I would revise my drafts through those images. My own belief is that such images come out of the unconscious, out of the world's unconscious . . . such images must relate to one's background . . . On the other hand, . . . they have a

universality . . . what is profoundly native, relates to what is profoundly universal. (*The Radical Imagination* 17)

This describes an experience of a writing process that gave him grounds to believe in a vision of the individual's unconscious connected to the 'world's unconscious'. The individual subjective experience could be interpreted as an expression of unacknowledged universal connection. Harris attributes the origins of the images he uses to the efforts of another's hand — the presence within his work of an agency and critical faculty (a 'judgement') present in his subjective experience, and yet transcending it.

Again, in a 1991 lecture at the University of Liege:

what seems hopeful to me — and I speak only from the discoveries I have made — is the discovery that there are strangers in the self. There are texts, coming from other cultures, which make themselves present in one's work. One respects these clues that seem so strange, one works through them, and then one begins to discover a strategy which makes a link with the past. The past is not eclipsed; the past comes back into play. One becomes an agent of this immense process, or dialogue, call it what you like. (125)

This sense of being an 'agent of process' ultimately prohibits Harris from using claims of innate agency to define his identity. His role is that of discoverer of literary method as a gateway to discovering unconscious mechanisms by perpetually enacting identity.

Harris's self-image as discoverer ('I would discover') is dependent upon a belief in having discovered an exterior agent 'asserting' its presence within his actions. As a discoverer of a precondition he could imagine his creative process is a dialogue between subjective and universal experience. He asserts the collective unconscious is a source of his imagery, but the act of revision is both his own and guided by the unconscious as if the creative process were a dialogue. Thus, his self-image is not that of inventor or sole originator but of discoverer of writing and re-reading as an access to the presence of the unconscious as an active source of creative action. The

'enigmatic force' of the unconscious 'intuitively . . . asserted itself' in *The Guyana Quartet* (18): we cannot expect Harris to provide a clear distinction between his conscious representation of the collective unconscious and attributing representation to unconscious forces because the novels form a self-reflexive allegory for the author. Harris believed the unconscious was an actual presence guiding revisions of language and image, which in turn developed the structure with which he was able to reassert faith in writing. The fictional representation of the collective unconscious allowed him to review his actions in symbolic terms and create a rationale that defined grounds for him to continue to assert a creative potential of the unconscious.

The method of revision with which the fiction is structured allowed Harris to imagine his actions determined by the collective unconscious, reaffirming his faith in his initial experiences and first novel, but involved a recognition that the unconscious entails cultural pluralism which challenges assumptions of a singular authorial writer and reader — a challenge Harris accepted. By imagining the collective unconscious as a force concurrent with historical development, he could propose that the origins of his own conflicts and processes are part of psychic causal processes originating from events in the remote past such as the extermination of Amerindian, Carib and other Indian tribes, the slave's experience of cleavage from Africa, the dislocation of the indentured Indian and even the possibility of unrecorded pre-historical events. Writing the novels allowed Harris to imagine these events as the origins of unconscious dimensions of modern Guyanese psychology, while also providing a context in which to conceive his own experiences as part of a natural process of individuation based on reclaiming a heritage from partial histories.

The issue is not whether Harris experienced a genuine vision from the collective unconscious, nor whether his writing involved him in an actual dialogue with archetypal images (which may well be the case) but that the extent to which he believed these things to be true allowed him to both recover faith in his creative abilities and view himself differently. The fact that he continued to assert the potential of discovery (or recovery) through later professional activities both indicates his faith and serves to perpetuate the ambiguity of his distinction between fictional

representation of the collective unconscious and the collective unconscious as an 'enigmatic force' in the present.

Bibliography

- Adams, Hazard. *Philosophy of the Literary Symbolic*. Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1983.
- Baugh, Edward. *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978.
- Benitez-Rojo, Antonio. *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*. Trans. James Maraniss. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992.
- Birbalsingh, Frank (Ed.). *Frontiers of Caribbean Literature in English*. London: Macmillan, 1996.
- Bocking, Brian. *Nagarajuna in China: A Translation of the Middle Treatise*. Lanham: Edwin Mellen Press, 1995.
- Campbell Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*. New York: Bollington Foundation, 1949.
- The Inner Reaches of Outer Space: Metaphor as Myth and as Religion*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.
- Cartey, Wilfred. *Whispers from the Caribbean: I Going away, I Going Home*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991.
- Cheng, Hsueh-li. *Nagarajuna's 'Twelve Gate Treatise'*. London: D. Reidel, 1982.

- Cleary, Thomas (Trans.). *The Flower Ornament Sutra: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra - vol. III: Entry into the Realm of Reality*. Boston: Shambhala, 1997.
- Collins, Steven. *Selfless Persons: Imagery and Thought in Theravada Buddhism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Conze, Edward. *Buddhist Scriptures*. London: Penguin, 1959.
- Buddhist Thought in India*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962.
- Cozort, Daniel. *The Sand Mandala of Vajrabhairava*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1995.
- Dance, Daryl Cumber. *Fifty Caribbean Writers: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Dathorne, O. E. (Ed.) *Caribbean Narrative: An Anthology of West Indian Writing*. London: Heinemann, 1966.
- Drake, Sandra E. *Wilson Harris and the Modern Tradition: A New Architecture of the World*. Ithaca, New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Easthope, Antony, and Kate McGowan (Eds.). *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.
- Edinger, Edward F. *Ego and Archetype: Individuation and the Religious Function of the Psyche*. New York: Penguin, 1972.
- Evans-Wentz, W. Y. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. London: Oxford University Press, 1960.

Fabre, Michel. 'Interview with Wilson Harris.' *World Literature Written in English* 22:1 (Spring 1983): 2-16.

Fletcher, Angus J. S. *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Frye, Northrop. *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991.

Gay, Volney P. *Reading Jung: Science, Psychology, and Religion*. California: Scholars Press, 1984.

Gilkes, Michael (Ed.). *The Literate Imagination: Essays on the Novels of Wilson Harris*. London: Macmillan, 1986.

----- *The West Indian Novel*. Boston: Twayne, 1981.

Harris, Wilson. *Da Silva's Cultivated Wilderness*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

----- *Explorations: A Selection of Talks and Articles 1966-1981*. Ed. Hena Maes-Jelinek. Mundelstrup: Dangaroo Press, 1981.

----- *Genesis of the Clowns*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.

----- *The Carnival Trilogy*. London: Faber and Faber, 1993.

----- *The Guyana Quartet*. London: Faber and Faber, 1985.

----- *The Secret Ladder*. 1962. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

-----*The Whole Armour*. 1963. London: Faber and Faber, 1973.

-----*Palace of the Peacock*. 1960. London: Faber and Faber, 1988.

-----*Selected Essays of Wilson Harris: The Unfinished Genesis of the Imagination*. Ed. Andrew Bundy. London: Routledge, 1999.

-----*The Radical Imagination: Lectures and Talks*. Eds. Riach, Alan, and Mark Williams. Liege: Liege Language and Literature, 1992.

-----*Tradition, the Writer and Society: Critical Essays*. London: New Beacon, 1967.

Honig, Edwin. *Dark Conceit: The Making of Allegory*. London: Faber and Faber, 1959.

Howard, W. J. 'Wilson Harris's 'Guiana Quartet': from personal myth to national identity.' *Ariel* 1:2 (1970): 46-60.

Jacobi, Jolande. *The Psychology of Jung*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1942.

James, Louis. 'Structure and Vision in the Novels of Wilson Harris.' *World Literature Written in English* 22:1 (Spring 1983): 39-46.

James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience; A Study in Human Nature*. Glasgow: Collins, 1982.

Jonas, Joyce. *Anancy in the Great House: Ways of Reading West Indian Fiction*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.

Jung, Carl G. and others. *Man and his Symbols*. London: Aldus Books, 1964.

- Lodge, David (Ed.). *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. London: Longman, 1988.
- Kiev, Ari. *Transcultural Psychiatry*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972.
- King, Bruce. *West Indian Literature*. London: Macmillan Press, 1979.
- Maes-Jelinek, Hena. *The Naked Design: A Reading of Palace the Peacock*. University of Aarhus: Dangaroo Press, 1976.
- Mercer, Gina. *Janet Frame: Subversive Fictions*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1994.
- Mountfort, Paul. *Carnival Time! Wilson Harris and the Carnavalesque*. Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1993. (Unpublished M.A. thesis.)
- Nair, Supriya. *Caliban's Curse: George Lamming and the Revisioning of History*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- O'Brian, John (Ed.). *The Review of Contemporary Fiction* 17:2 (Summer 1997).
- Parry, J. H., & Philip Sherlock. *A Short History of the West Indies*. London: Macmillan, 1971.
- Prebish, Charles S. (Ed.). *Buddhism: A Modern Perspective*. London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975.
- Ramchand, Kenneth. *The West Indian Novel and its Background*. London: Faber and Faber, 1970.

- Ramraj, Victor J. 'Palace of the Peacock: A Portrait of the Artist.' *World Literature Written in English* 22:1 (Spring 1983): 47-54.
- Rice, Philip, & Patricia Waugh (Eds.). *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader*. London: Edward Arnold, 1992.
- Robinson, R. & W. Johnson. *The Buddhist Religion; A Historic Introduction*. Encino, California: Dickenson, 1977.
- Sen, Sharmila. 'Wilson Harris's Who-You Bird.' *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 34:2 (1999): 33-46.
- Tachikawa, Musachi. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nagarajuna*. Trans. R.W. Giebel. Delhi: Moyilal Banarsidass, 1997.
- Webb, Barbara J. *Myth and History in Caribbean Fiction: Alejo Carpentier, Wilson Harris, & Edouard Glissant*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992.
- Williams, Paul. *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Wilson-Tagoe, Nana. *Historical Thought and Literary Representation in West Indian Literature*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998.
- Yates, Frances A. *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.